

MILITARY CHAPLAINS'

REVIEW

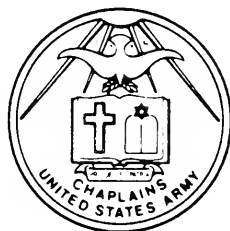
1981

Military Chaplains' Review

DA Pam 165—130
Summer, 1981

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Preface

The *Military Chaplains' Review* is designed as a medium in which those interested in the military chaplaincy can share with chaplains the product of their experience and research. We welcome articles which are directly concerned with supporting and strengthening chaplains professionally. Preference will be given to those articles having lasting value as reference material.

The *Military Chaplains' Review* is published quarterly. The opinions reflected in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Chief of Chaplains or the Department of the Army. When used in this publication, the terms "the," "him," and "his" are intended to include both the masculine and feminine genders; any exceptions to this will be so noted.

Articles should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced, to the Editor, Military Chaplains' Review, United States Army Chaplain Board, Myer Hall, Bldg. 1207, Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703. Articles should be approximately 8 to 18 pages in length and, when appropriate, should be carefully footnoted. Detailed editorial guidelines are available from the editor on request.

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Chaplain (LTC) John J. Hoogland May 1971-June 1974
Chaplain (LTC) Joseph E. Galle III July 1974-September 1976
Chaplain (LTC) Rodger R. Venzke October 1976-July 1981

Chief of Chaplains

Chaplain (MG) Kermit D. Johnson

A Few Parting Words

With this issue, I'm concluding a five-year assignment as editor of this journal. A few parting words, therefore, seem appropriate. As you know, however, editors have few original thoughts. They're accustomed to getting their names in print through the hard work of other writers. In that tradition, therefore, my parting words are random gleanings from authors which I dedicate to specific groups of people.

For those who never understood how I got this job in the first place?

Unprovided with original learning, unformed in the habits of thinking, unskilled in the arts of composition, I resolved to write a book.

——Edward Gibbon

For those who put up with my “editorial guidelines,” though no one could actually understand them:

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

——Peter De Vries

For those who could not understand why their well-written manuscripts were rejected:

Your manuscript is both good and original; but the part that is good is not original, and the part that is original is not good.

——Samuel Johnson

For those whose manuscripts should *not* have been rejected:

Literature is an occupation in which you have to keep proving your talent to people who have none.

——Jules Renard

For those who agreed to write articles and then wished they hadn't:

Writing is the hardest way of earning a living, with the possible exception of wrestling alligators.

——Olin Miller

For those who felt guilty about how long it took them to write something they had promised:

What no wife of a writer can ever understand is that a writer is working when he's staring out of the window.

——Burton Rascoe

For those who couldn't recognize their own works after they were published:

No passion in this world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft.

——H.G. Wells

For those who wrote extremely meaningful material but not one reader responded:

If you want to get rich from writing, write the sort of thing that's read by persons who move their lips when they're reading to themselves.

——Don Marquis

Finally, for all of us who occasionally take ourselves too seriously as writers:

Sometimes I think it sounds like I walked out of the room and left the typewriter running.

——Gene Fowler

A thousand thanks to all those who have helped the *MCR* grow! That goes not only to the authors but especially to those behind-the-scenes administrators and secretaries—at the Army Chaplain Board, Office of the Chief of Chaplains and the Adjutant General's Publications Directorate. They are the ones who really make such things as this journal possible.

My best wishes go to my successor, Chaplain (MAJ) Richard Donovan. Dick is inheriting one of the best jobs in the military. He will share the humbling experience of all his predecessors—amazement over the rich talent and dedication of our Armed Forces chaplains throughout the world. Thank you for having given me that privilege!

——Editor

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C.

Summer 1981

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New Language for New People

Chaplain (MAJ) Charles E. Mallard

A college professor of mine once said that a person has not mastered an idea until he can summarize it in one sentence. I am sure that I have not mastered the intricacies of cerebral specialization, but I think I understand the concept well enough to summarize it in one sentence.

The thesis of cerebral specialization is simple: the human brain is divided into two hemispheres that talk different languages, perceive the world through different "filters," and represent reality to both self and others in two distinct formats. While the thesis is simple, its practical application is not, as I expect to show later in this paper.

Let me elaborate on the thesis first. The cerebral cortex of the brain is divided into two hemispheres, joined by a large bundle of interconnecting fibers called the "corpus callosum." The left side of the body is mainly controlled by the right side of the cortex, while the right side of the body is controlled by the left side of the cortex. Thus, we all carry with us a set of twins inside our skull: our two hemispheres, which are in fact two separate brains with very different functions.

The left hemisphere, which is connected with the right side of the body, is predominately involved with analytic, logical thinking. It represents reality in phonetic terms and communicates with the outside world on the basis of a logical-analytical-digital coding of the surrounding world. This hemisphere seems to process sequentially the information it receives and orders; and, therefore, its mode of operation underlies logical thought, since logic depends on sequence and order. Language and mathematics are both left hemispheric activities since they both depend predominantly on linear time.¹ In the literature of cerebral specialization, it is often referred to as the verbal, or major, hemisphere.² Its language is sometimes referred to as "digital" language, while the language of the right hemisphere is referred to as "analogic."

The function of the right hemisphere is very different: It is highly specialized in the holistic grasping of complex relationships, patterns, configurations, and structures. Most of the clinical and experimental evidence seems to

¹Robert E. Ornstein, *The Psychology of Consciousness*, (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman & Company, 1972), pp. 51-52.

²Paul Watzlawick, *The Language of Change*. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1978), p. 21.



Chaplain Mallard, a Southern Baptist, is presently assigned to the 193d Infantry Brigade in Panama. He is a Clinical Member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapeutics and has several years experience in the field of marriage and family counseling. His area of special interest is the application of "Brief Therapy" to marriage and family problems.

suggest that this ability must be somehow akin to the technique of holography, for the right hemisphere not only masters the perception and recognition of a gestalt from the most diverse angles and consequent relative distortions (a natural ability of the brain which still presents great problems for computer simulation), but that it may manage to perceive and recognize the totality from a very small portion of the latter. This enables us, for instance, to recognize a person although we may see only a tiny part of his face, very much as a musician may identify a concert or a symphony on the basis of one single bar or even just one chord. This ability of the right hemisphere seems to be based on the *pars-pro-toto* principle, that is, the immediate recognition of a totality on the basis of one essential detail.”³

What happens when, through accident or design, a person’s brain is “split” into its two hemispheres so that each hemisphere may be “blocked off” for separate stimulation and testing? In such a case, research reveals that the left hemisphere is capable of speech, writing, and calculation but has difficulty with problems involving spatial relationships and novel figures, whereas the right hemisphere can easily carry out tasks involving complex spatial and musical patterns, but can perform simple addition only up to ten, has the use of few words, and comprehends syntax at about the level of a 2-year-old,...⁴ thus, “Its language is archaic and under-developed—so much so that the right hemisphere is often referred to in literature as the ‘silent one’.”⁵

The research in cerebral specialization seems to be confirmed by research in linguistics and communication. Paul Watzlawick, a world authority on human communication and communication therapy states that:

...we find an almost identical polarity; namely that between the digital and analogic modalities. They offer two different ways of expressing a given meaning. In the digital mode it is communicated by a sign whose relation to the intended meaning is a purely conventional and thus quite arbitrary one, albeit one which must of necessity be shared by all its users if communication is to take place. A simple example would be any word on this page. Between it and its meaning there is no immediate, self-explanatory or directly understandable connection, but merely the tacit convention that this string of symbols (or, in the case of spoken language, of sounds) shall have that specific meaning in English. For this form of representation the term digital was taken over from mathematics. The other possibility is the use of a sign which does have some obvious relation to the thing it signifies (the *significatum*) in that it represents a likeness or analogy; hence the term analogic. Examples would be maps and their relation to the territory they represent (except, of course, the geographical names printed on them), images and pictorial signs of all kinds (although continued use may eventually digitalize them, as in the case with most signs in Chinese writing), true symbols (and not only allegories) as they emerge in dreams, onomatopoetic words (such as crash, hiss, bang) *pars-pro-toto* representations (in which certain parts stand for the whole), and so forth.

³*Ibid.*, p. 22

⁴David Galin, M.D., “Implications for Psychiatry of Left and Right Cerebral Specialization,” *Archives of General Psychiatry*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October 1974), p. 573.

⁵Watzlawick, *The Language of Change*, p. 24.

The fact that there exist these two “languages” very strongly suggests that they must be representative of two very different world images, for it is known that a language does not so much reflect reality as create it.”⁶

Robert Ornstein points out that duality of consciousness has long been recognized in other cultures. The Hopi Indians of the American Southwest identify the functions of one hand as that of writing, while the function of the other is one for making music. Law is a linear and rational pursuit; and, interestingly, the French word for law is *droit*, which literally means “right.” (This identifies law as a right-hand but left-brain function.)

There are even sexuality overtones to the duality of consciousness. For instance, the Mojave Indians teach that the left hand is the passive, maternal side of the person, while the right hand is the active father. In myth and symbolism, the left side (but right-brain) is often identified with the taboo, the sacred, the unconscious, the feminine, the intuitive, and the dreamer. In contrast, the right side (but left-brain) is identified as the conscious, active, rational and masculine side.⁷

As I said at the outset of this paper, the thesis is simple but the practical application is not. I believe that one reason that it is difficult to apply the findings of hemispheric research is that our entire culture (and thus so much of our theology and worship) has been shaped toward a left-brain way of perceiving, interpreting, and acting on reality.

It was the 16th century English Protestant tradition which shaped a domination of our culture, the consequences of which are only now becoming apparent. John Dillenberger states in his essay, “Faith and Sensibility,” that “...the 16th-18th century English Protestant had all the earmarks of a linguistic, hearing culture in which the eyes were directed by being told what to see. Such a clarifying power of language produced a significant literature, molded theology totally by language, but narrowed the horizons of visual perception. Seeing was not a mode of learning to be trusted in its own right....” [Thus,] we have a veritable arsenal of words to deal with the realm of the objective, rational, cognitive, scientific, empirical—qualities of the left side of the brain; and we tend to know what we mean by these words. By contrast, our vocabulary to address the realm of the arts and religion is neither so accurate nor are we so sure that we understand what one another means in the area of the subjective, intuitive, spiritual, esthetic, transcendent, artistic, cultural—qualities of the right side of the brain.”⁸

Our vocabulary, therefore, has become a limiting factor for us. To return to Watzlawick, our “...language does not so much reflect reality as create it.” And the reality created for us tends to be a left-brain reality...a reality of the rational and the objective that is bound by the constraints of the sequential and the linear. This leaves most of us, I believe, with underdeveloped skills in terms of the intuitive, the subjective, the creative, the holistic, and the transcendent. Yet these are the very skills of which chaplains encourage development in the name of “faith.”

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁷Ornstein, *The Psychology of Consciousness*, p. 64.

⁸Grant Spradling, “The New Spiritual Awakening,” *Military Chaplains' Review*, DA Pam 165-121, Spring 1979, pp. 2-3.

I hope that we begin to see the source of so much of our impotence as ministers. People come to us for pastoral counseling so often as “sufferers.” They chronicle a history of “problems” with which they are having difficulty in coping. We “counsel,” but nothing “changes.” They continue to suffer from “reality.”

Or they sit in the pew and listen to us preach. Perhaps we preach well-researched, carefully reasoned sermons; yet we are left with the nagging feeling that somehow we are “not getting through” to them. We are unable to effect “change” in person’s lives, as we would like, by our preaching. (On the other hand, have you ever had the experience of having a congregant approach you weeks after you preached a sermon, “quote” something you said entirely out of context, and then tell you how helpful it was to them? I have! And I have seen lives dramatically changed by just such “misunderstandings.” However, from a right-brain point of view, perhaps there was no misunderstanding at all. Perhaps what was said from the left-side of my brain was perceived and interpreted by the right-brain of the other persons in a way that “fit” their analogue of reality; but I was left scratching my head when I heard them tell me what they heard me say they found so helpful!)

Thus, people suffer not so much from “reality” as from their “image of reality.” They carry “pictures” (analogues) around in their right brains of what the world should be. And through preaching (a verbal, left-brain function) and counseling (again a verbal, sequential, linear, logical, and left-brain function) we seek to relieve them of their suffering (the source of which is the analogue they carry in their *right* brain)! No wonder we often feel impotent and wonder why we aren’t “getting through.” The fact is, we aren’t! We aren’t because we are attempting to translate analogic language into the digital language of explanation, argument, analysis, confrontation, interpretation, and so forth, which repeats the mistake that made the sufferer seek help in the first place.

What is needed, therefore, is an entirely new way of “doing business,” as it were. Using the media of prayer, meditation, liturgy, preaching, and counseling we need to learn to address ourselves to the right hemisphere of the brain, to learn right hemispheric language and utilize it as the royal road to change.⁹ And this process is the difficult application of the simple thesis.

We have a model for this very process. Look at the ministry of Jesus. Both his public and private discourse was filled with picture-language. He addressed himself to the analogue-worlds of his hearers by suggesting new analogues that offered comfort to the suffering and challenge to the complacent. His “sermons” were merely stories about people. They did not have “three points and a poem.” (It takes the linear function of the left-brain to keep track of three points.) Instead, his sermons had one central point that was made in the course of the story itself. Most of the

⁹Watzlawick, *The Language of Change*, pp. 46-47.

time, that point impacted on the hearers as self-evident. On a few occasions, however, his hearers asked for further explanation of his meaning (e.g., the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:4—15), and he gave them a left-brain explanation of a right-brain analogue.

Look too, at his private discourse. He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well about the “Water of Life.” He talked to Nicodemus about being “born again.” To a grieving Martha, he said “I am the resurrection and the life.” And on and on the list could go!

To me, the most reality-transforming analogue of all is the Cross, and the Cross was an event, not a discourse. In the Roman world of the first century, the Cross stood for shame, guilt, death, and defeat. To the Penitent today, it still stands for those same “realities.” The penitent “looks” (note the emphasis on the visual element of faith) at the Cross and “feels” (note the emphasis on the subjective) ashamed and guilty, becomes aware of his own mortality and his own powerlessness to control sin in his life. Yet contemplating that Cross on which *Jesus* died, that same Penitent understands at an intuitive level that it no longer represents the “realities” it once represented. It now represents the “realities” of grace, forgiveness, life, and victory. the greatest “sermon” Jesus ever preached, then, was not in words but in an Act! Add to this the “analogic” quality of the Eucharistic meal (bread for body, wine for blood, tied into the liberation motif of the Passover meal), and it should be obvious that Jesus addressed himself forcefully to the right-brain analogues of mankind.

We, too, can address ourselves to the right-brain analogues of those to whom we minister. In fact, we often do this without being aware that this is what is happening. For example, I sat in a chapel service recently and found myself observing the congregation while another chaplain preached. He preached a three-point expository sermon based on a psalm. For most of the sermon, the congregation seemed to be somewhere else. (Obviously, I was, too, since I had drifted into the role of observer.) However, at one point in the message, the chaplain began to describe an incident out of his own life that had had a profound effect on him. As I observed the congregation, I could see the people shift their attention back to the speaker. Even the children became less restless. I am sure the chaplain’s illustration, simple as it was, was the high point of the sermon for most of the people; and the beauty of this “happening” was that the incident he described “fit” the text so well that it formed a “gestalt” from Psalmist, to Preacher, to me. Suddenly, I “understood” the psalm in a new way and ended up with a new appreciation for both the psalm and the preacher. Note, however, that I grasped only *one* idea from this sermon and that I remembered it because of the illustration, not the exposition.

I maintain, however, that what often happens (or seems to happen) by chance, or perhaps even misunderstanding, as I said earlier, can be studied and learned to a certain degree. A number of people are now doing so.

Carolyn Stahl's *Opening To God* is an example. She states:

I find that we Christians have especially limited our prayer-life to the verbal, separate, discrete-object mode. We have access to Divine guidance through intuition, creativity, and a sense of unity with all things, but most of us have not been using these resources. Many of us have expressed our concerns to God in prayer. However, we have neglected to still ourselves, to open to God, and to listen. Both prayer *and* meditation, verbal *and* intuitive imaginative approaches offer potential for spiritual growth.¹⁰

Using Ornstein's *The Psychology of Consciousness* and *On The Psychology of Meditation* as a theoretical base, she offers the reader a series of guided-imagery meditations aimed at the right-brain of the reader-hearer. So hemispheric specialization has implications for preaching and for developing the contemplative life as an expression of worship.

John Killinger, professor of preaching, worship, and literature at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University, has written about "learning to pray better." He suggests "listening prayer"; praying by simply repeating short, meaningful biblical or liturgical phrases over and over again (similar to using a mantra); and using our fantasies and dreams as bases for praying.¹¹ There are ways of using right-hemispheric language to enrich our prayer life.

A third example is "Process Meditation," suggested by Ira Progoff in *The Well and the Cathedral*. He uses various images (analogues) as "carriers" of the meditation experience. Some of his meditation titles are pure right-hemisphere: "Muddy/Clear: The Mirror of the Water," "The Downward/Upward Journey," "The Waters beyond the Well," "Sharing the Underground Stream," "Into the Well of the Self," and "Entering the Cathedral." Progoff does not ask the reader-hearer to "understand" logically the juxtaposition of the downward/upward journey. Rather, he asks them to simply let it happen within the self; i.e., to "understand" it experientially.

Watzlawick, in *The Language of Change*, describes a number of right-hemisphere language patterns that have implications for preaching, worship, and pastoral care. "Condensations" are one example. A condensation is a minimal use of digital language that seems to condense entire "realities" into just a word or two. Suppose someone told you a restaurant served *biodeplorable* food, would you be inclined to eat there? And look how suggestive it is to describe a widespread VD epidemic as *syphilization*. Jokes, too, are condensations that are especially feared by dictators and totalitarian regimes (and even some thin-skinned politicians in democracies) because they have "...a disrespectful quality to make light of seemingly monolithic world images."¹² Yet it is this same quality that lends a therapeutic effect to jokes. Perhaps this may help us to understand "...why

¹⁰Carolyn Stahl, *Opening to God*, (Nashville, Tn.: The Upper Room, 1977), p. 18.

¹¹John Killinger, "Learning to Pray Better," *Faith at Work*, Vol. XCIII, No. 5 (September—October 1980), p. 28f.

¹²Watzlawick, p. 55

it is that people who suffer from emotional problems are half over them once they manage to laugh at their predicament.¹³ The “joke” has shattered the reality-image that bound the person into the emotional problem.

“Figurative language” forms are another right hemisphere language pattern. Guided imagery, litanies, poetry, the deliberate concretization of rhetorical abstractions are all types of figurative language—the language of change. “Imaging,” for example, is being used extensively and successfully in the treatment of physical illnesses. It is also being used as a way of “praying” for the sick. In some cases, the pray-er is asked to visualize the white light of God’s healing presence surrounding the sick person, penetrating that person’s entire body, localizing in the area that is diseased, and healing the disease.

Consider, too, how powerful the use of allegories and parables can be both in preaching and pastoral counseling. Both are based on the *pars pro toto* principle that “a part substitutes for the whole.” Watzlawick quotes an excerpt from Charle Bukowski’s poem, “The Shoelace,” as an excellent example of how a poet summarizes something so complex as mental illness in just a few lines:

...It’s not the large things that send a man to the madhouse,...
No, it’s the continuing series of small tragedies that send a man to the
madhouse...
Not the death of his love
But a shoelace that
snaps with no time left.¹⁴

An aphorism, which Webster defines as “a short, pointed sentence expressing a wise or clever observation or a general truth,” can likewise be built into our sermons and counseling. Think of how widely used these two aphorisms have become: “The Buck Stops Here,” and “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.” The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a grand collection of aphorisms that have been used for centuries in preaching, worship, and counseling.

Deliberate ambiguities, puns, and allusions likewise are the language of change. Frequently used in the past, we now have a theoretical basis for understanding their impact. “Love is a four-letter word” seems to impact on our right-hemisphere from several directions at once.

Watzlawick suggests that all these right-hemisphere language patterns have the effect of changing the word-images (or reality-analogues) that we carry around in our heads. We can study them, study their effects, and learn to use them,, at least to a certain degree. By so doing, we can improve our ministry to “suffering mankind.”

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper has been to explore some of the implica-

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 71.

tions for ministry of cerebral specialization. The thesis of cerebral specialization was stated: that the human brain is divided into two hemispheres that talk different languages, perceive the world through different filters, and represent "reality" to both self and others in two distinct formats. It was then suggested that much of our failure as clergy to truly help people comes because we address ourselves to the left hemisphere of people's heads when we should be communicating with the right hemisphere. But in order to communicate with the right hemisphere, we must study and learn its distinctive language patterns. Several patterns were listed as examples.

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Memorable Preaching

David G. Myers and John J. Shaughnessy

A young couple, Martha and Leon, happily file out from Sunday worship at the St. Andrews Church, congratulating the Rev. Jones for his fine message on Christian love. Later that week, Martha's friend Sally, who was ill on Sunday, asks her about the sermon. Martha is embarrassed to admit that while she remembers being impressed by the sermon, she can recall little of its content. Perhaps, she surmises, she is just upset and distracted by how unloving Leon has been lately.

Is this scene typical or atypical of the impact of sermons? Those of us who are teachers or preachers become so easily enamored of our spoken words that we are tempted to overestimate their power. Ask college students what aspect of their college experience has been most valuable, or what they remember from their freshman year, and few will recall the brilliant lectures which we faculty remember giving.

Would the same be true of parishoners reflecting on their church experience? A recent award-winning study by University of California psychologist Thomas Crawford indicates that sermons sometimes have surprisingly little impact. Crawford and his associates went to the homes of people from twelve parishes shortly before and after they heard sermons opposing racial bigotry and injustice. When asked, during the second interview, whether they had heard or read anything about racial prejudice or discrimination since the previous interview, only 10% spontaneously recalled the sermon. When the remaining 90% were asked directly whether their priest "talked about prejudice or discrimination in the last couple of weeks" more than 30% denied hearing such a sermon. It is therefore hardly surprising that the sermons had no impact on racial attitudes.

When you stop to think about it, the preacher has so many hurdles to surmount it's no wonder that preaching so often fails to affect our actions. As **Figure 1** indicates, the preacher must deliver a message which



David G. Myers is professor of psychology at Hope College, Holland, Michigan. He is the author of the recently published *The Inflated Self: Human Illusions and the Biblical Call to Hope* (Seabury)



John J. Shaughnessy is assistant professor of psychology at Hope College and co-author of *Experimentation in Psychology* (Wiley).

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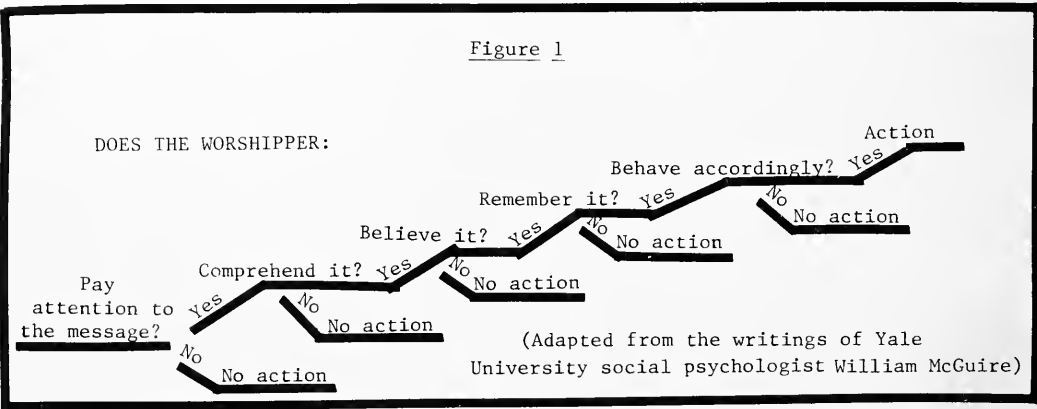
not only gets our attention, but is also understandable, persuasive, memorable, and likely to compel action. What factors make the memorable, effective communications? How might ministers and teachers apply these factors in the construction of more potent messages? And what can we lay people do to receive maximum benefits from what we hear?

Effective communication is, of course, a composite of several things: a significant thought cast in a memorable form, skillful oration, and listeners who are ready to hear the word. Our concern here is neither with theological content nor with oratorical style, but with how to create and receive a memorable persuasive message. Recent research has revealed five keys to doing so.

The Five Keys

1. *Vivid, concrete examples are more potent than abstract information.* Many recent experiments have found that our judgments and attitudes are more swayed by specific illustrations than by abstract assertions of general truth. Since this statement is itself an abstract assertion, let's look at some concrete examples.

Research studies show that a few good testimonials usually have more impact than statistically summarized data from dozens of people. Not surprisingly, then the mastectomies performed on Betty Ford and Happy Rockefeller did more to increase visits to cancer detection clinics than all the reports of the National Institutes of Health. Likewise, viewing the movie "Jaws" gave many swimmers a fear of sharks which no factual data on actual shark attacks could eliminate.



Concrete examples are not only more compelling, they are also better remembered. Joanne Martin and her colleagues at Stanford University have observed that *concepts* are also better remembered when concrete details are included. They had Coast Guard recruits read one of the following paragraphs and then write everything they could recall from it. Those who read an abstract description of what happens when a Coast Guard regulation is broken recalled only 27% of the words afterwards:

If a new Seaman Apprentice breaks a Coast Guard regulation, and this frequently happens, then he usually gets caught. If he gives serious personal

excuses for what he did, then the Executive Officer usually will not accept such excuses. Executive Officers usually refer the matter to mast. Usually in these cases the defendant is found guilty. If the new Seaman Apprentice is found guilty, then he will be sentenced with a variety of punishments.

Other recruits read a concrete instance of this information:

Robert Christensen, a new Seaman Apprentice, reported for duty on the *CG Cutter Seagull* two days late. His excuse for being late was that his father had become seriously ill while he was visiting home. The Executive Officer did not accept his excuse. He referred the matter to mast. Seaman Apprentice Christensen was found guilty and sentenced to one month extra duty, a \$50 fine each month for two months, and one month restriction.

Those given this anecdotal paragraph not only recalled almost twice as many words as those given the abstract paragraph, they also were about twice as likely to recall concepts such as “found guilty.”

No experienced writer will be surprised by this finding. As William Strunk and E.B. White assert in their classic, *The Elements of Style*,

If those who have studied the art of writing are in accord on any one point, it is on this: the surest way to arouse and hold the attention of the reader is by being specific, definite, and concrete. The greatest writers—Homer, Dante, Shakespeare—are effective largely because they deal in particulars....

Preachers should do the same, and so should we listeners, by conjuring up our own examples when the preacher begins to get abstract.

A sermon is, however, never just a string of unrelated examples; the preacher aims to communicate a basic point. We might say that theological truth is to a good sermon what the base of an iceberg is to its tip. Jesus’ vivid parables, for example, embodied basic truths in memorable pictures. And what pastor has not received compliments from adults for a simple, but concrete, children’s sermon? The children may have been unable to grasp the analogy being drawn, but the adults got it and remembered it. This illustrates the power of principle number one; vivid, concrete examples are more potent than abstract information.

2. Messages which relate to what people already know or have experienced and most easily remembered. Public speaking experts have long supposed this to be true—Aristotle urged speakers to adapt the message to their audiences. Experimental psychologists have confirmed the point; messages that are unrelated to people’s existing ideas or experiences are difficult to comprehend and quickly forgotten. This paragraph from an experiment by John Gransford, and Marcia Johnson, is an example of such a message:

The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do....After the procedure is completed, one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their proper places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is a part of life.

When Bransford and Johnson had people read this paragraph as you just did—without connecting it to anything they already knew about—little of it was remembered. When people were told that the paragraph was about washing clothes (something familiar to them), they remembered much more of it—as you probably could now if you reread it.

When a message builds upon our knowledge and experience we not only more easily understand and remember it, we are also more likely to recall it when that knowledge or experience comes again into consciousness. In other words, a message that is “hooked” to some cue—something we will again think about or experience—is more likely to come to mind in the future. When the cue pops up, it may reinstate the message associated with it. For example, one preacher criticized much of American religion as like waiting room Muzak—blank and soothing. A year after this “Sound of Muzak” sermon was preached we found ourselves eating dinner in a room with music softly playing in the background. Someone noticed the music—and recalled the sermon.

If preachers are to build their messages upon their parishioners’ knowledge and experience, then they must know their parishioners. One advantage which local pastors *should* have over mass media preachers is a more intimate knowledge of the thinking and life experiences of their people. When pastors systematically seek out their parishioners for in-depth conversation, they are engaging in sermon preparation as well as pastoral ministry. And when we parishioners freely talk to our pastors about our concerns, we help the pastors to know what sermon themes will touch us. This is another implication of principle number two: messages which relate to what people already know or have experienced are most easily remembered.

3. *Spaced repetition aids memory.* As every student of human learning knows well, we remember information much better if it is presented to us repeatedly, especially if the repetitions are spaced over time rather than grouped together. Experimental psychologist Lynn Hasher has found that repeated information is also more credible. When statements, such as “The largest museum in the world is the Louvre in Paris,” were repeatedly presented to people, they were rated as more likely to be true than when the same statements had been shown infrequently. Social psychologists have uncovered a parallel phenomenon: repeated presentation of unfamiliar music—generally increased people’s liking of it.

Preachers can capitalize upon this finding that repetition, especially spaced repetition, makes messages more memorable and appealing. When preparing a sermon they might ask themselves, what do I most want people to remember from this? This can then repeat that *one* key idea numerous times throughout the sermon. (We suspect that a little informal testing of parishioners’ recall would reveal few people who can recall the main points of the last three-point sermon they heard. Given the limitations of human memory, the advice of Henry Grady Davis appears sound: A sermon

should be “the embodiment of one vigorous idea.”) Perhaps this could even be taken a step further to say that the idea should be embodied in the whole worship service—the Scriptures, music, prayers, and closing charge to the congregation. As parishioners we should look for a unifying theme, or at least identify one idea in every service that is significant for us.

Sometimes the key idea can be captured in a single statement of pithy saying that becomes the trunk of a sermon, unifying the illustrative branches that grow from it. Who can forget the refrain in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” sermon? Principle number three therefore bears repeating: spaced repetition aids retention.

4. *Active listening aids memory and facilitates attitude change.* It is well established that people remember information best when they have actively processed it, that is, when they have *rehearsed it* and *reformulated it* in their own words. When we read or hear something that prompts a thought of our own, we will often more readily remember the thought than the information which prompted it. University of Toronto psychologists Norman Slamecka and Peter Graf recently found that people can more easily recall information they have produced than information they have been told to memorize. For example, people who were given the word “rapid” and were asked to produce a synonym beginning with the letter “f” later remembered the word “fast” better than did people asked directly to remember “fast.”

The memorability of self-produced information may be one reason why reformulation facilitates attitude change as well as memory. For example, social psychologists have found that passive exposure to information, through reading or listening, has less effect on people’s attitudes than when they get the same information through active participation in a group discussion. There is a great persuasive power to self-produced ideas. Other research confirms that when we passively learn about something our attitudes toward it usually do not change much. When we are stimulated into reformulating or rehearsing information in our own terms, we are much more likely to remember it *and* to be persuaded by it.

Preachers, teachers, and even parents may fail to recognize that their spoken words are more prominent to them (as active speakers) than to their passive listeners. Parents are often amazed at their children’s capacity to ignore them. If, instead of constant harping, the parent gently ask the child to restate the request (“Andy, what did I ask you to do?”) the child’s act of verbalizing the parental request will often amplify his consciousness of it. Mister Rogers, the television friend of pre-schoolers, applies this principle by asking a question and then saying nothing for a few moments—allowing children to answer for themselves. Preachers would be well advised to do likewise, by pausing after giving an instruction or raising a thought-provoking question.

People who rehearse an idea are more likely also to *act* upon it. This is implied by research on the impact of participating in a public opinion poll, conducted by Michael Traugott and John Katosh of the University of

Michigan. People who rehearse their political attitudes by participating in a pre-election survey more often act on them by voting in the election than do people not selected for the survey. For this reason, too, sermon listeners should be provoked to rehearse and reformulate what they hear.

We listeners can also discipline ourselves to listen actively. Taking notes on the sermon, as any serious student does in class, forces us to rehearse and reformulate its main points. So does discussing it with someone else. William James made the point 80 years ago: “No reception without *reaction*, no impression without correlative expression—this is the great maxim which the teacher ought never to forget.” James anticipated principle number four: active listening aids memory and facilitates attitude change.

5. *Attitudes and beliefs are shaped by actions.* If social psychological research has established anything, it is that our actions influence our attitudes. Every time we act, we amplify the idea lying behind what we have done, especially when we feel some responsibility for having committed the act. In experiments, people who harm someone—by delivering electric shocks, for example—tend to express disdain for their victim. Evil acts shape the self. But so do moral acts. People who help another person often express increased liking for the one they have helped. Similarly, people who write essays advocating something they have real doubts about, tend to become more sympathetic to what they have written. It seems that we are as likely to believe what we have stood up for as to stand up for what we believe.

This social psychological principle that action amplifies attitude is paralleled by the biblical idea that growth in faith is a *consequence* as well as a source of obedient action. Throughout the Old and New Testaments we are told that full knowledge of God comes through actively *doing* the word; faith is nurtured by discipleship. Jesus declared that whoever would *do* the will of God would know God; that he would come and dwell within those who heed what he said; and that we would find ourselves, not by passive contemplation, but by losing ourselves as we take up the cross. Over and over again, the Bible teaches that the gospel power can be known only by living it.

One practical implication of this action-attitude principle is the desirability of engaging people as active participants in worship, not as mere spectators of religious theater. The public act of choosing to get out of one's seat and kneel publicly before the congregation is one clear example. When the people sing or speak responses, write their own confessions, contribute prayer; read Scripture responsively, utter exclamations, bring their offerings forward, make the sign of the cross, or sit, stand, or kneel—acts which viewers of the electronic churches seldom perform—they have made the liturgy their own work.

The implication for preaching and teaching is clear: a message is most likely to stimulate faith development if it calls forth a specific action. The effective sermon will therefore not leave people wondering what to do

with it. It will suggest specific actions or it will stimulate listeners to formulate their own plan of action. "How will 'Love your Neighbor' affect you?" the preacher might ask. "Whom are you going to phone or visit this week?"

These five research-based principles for constructing a memorable and persuasive message can be wedded to a variety of preaching styles and theological orientation. Just remember:

1. Vivid, _____ examples are more potent than abstract information.
2. Messages which relate to what people already _____ or have _____ are most easily remembered.
3. Spaced _____ aids retention.
4. _____ aids memory and facilitates attitude change.
5. Attitudes and beliefs are shaped by _____.

And if you really want to remember these principles, look away and repeat them in your own words. Better yet, tell someone else about them or pick out one or two and think about how you might apply them to the next message you prepare or hear.

Making Biblical Personalities Real For Today

The Reverend Ross S. McClintock

EDITOR'S NOTE: The MCR normally does not publish sermons. Occasionally, however, a homily is brought to our attention which has particular relevance for the ministry of chaplains—both in regard to the sermon's preparation as well as in its spiritual message. Such is the case with the Reverend McClintock's sermon on "Mount Gilboa." It is offered here with a few introductory comments.

Some sermons seem to write themselves. They take on a life of their own and move in directions that you did not plan for them. The sermon attached to this article is just such a sermon. It is part of a sermon series that was designed to fill a four Sunday gap on the calendar that seemed to cry for a mini-series. I had in my library for a number of years a book entitled *I Want That Mountain* by G. Avery Less (Nelson Co. 1974). Dr. Lee gave me the mountains, but his emphasis was for another place and time in history; so beyond the idea, I was on my own.

I find that people are hungry for stories, and Bible stories often are new to them. Each of the mountains I chose had a man and his story attached to it. Mt Nebo—the last moments of Moses' life. Mt. Camel and Mt. Horeb—the high moment and low moment in Elijah's life. And then we visited the Hill of Moreh from which Gideon launched his attack that is still known as the "Day of Midian". And then the mountain of the attached sermon, Mt. Gilboa, and the last moments of Saul's sad life.

As I read for the Mt. Gilboa sermon, the personalities of Samuel and Saul began to emerge in a clarity I had never seen before. Samuel had always been the "good guy", Saul, the weak villain. The more I met these men in Scripture, the more it became clear that Samuel had some things to answer for.

1. *His petulant agreeing to anoint Saul—I Samuel 10:17-19, I Samuel 12.* Verse 19—But you have this day rejected your God, who saves you from all calamities and your distresses, and you have said "No! But set a King over us!"
2. *His impossible behavior just before the Battle of Michmash—I Samuel 13.* Saul is faced with a hostile Philistine army with an Israelite army of mostly farmers turned soldier, and the tension mounts as Samuel, after seven days, does not appear



The Reverend Ross S. McClintock is Pastor of Highland Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Highland Church has grown from 149 members to over 1,800 members in 22 years. He has been Pastor of the church for 14 years. Before coming to Lancaster, Mr. McClintock served churches in Pittsburgh and Greencastle, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of Grove City College and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

to make the necessary sacrifice. Saul out of desperation, makes the sacrifice and Samuel, when he does arrive, is furious. We begin to get the picture of an impossible crotchety old man.

3. *His denunciation and abandonment of Saul after the Amalekite raid—I Samuel 15.* There is no question Saul's excuse for sparing the life of King Agag, and seeks forgiveness, Samuel weak. But when Saul repents and seeks forgiveness, Samuel seems to have none to give. I was fascinated with a remark that Samuel makes to Saul in 15:17, "though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the Tribe of Israel?" Samuel seems to sense Saul's poor image of himself, an image that Samuel has done everything in his power to produce. Saul seems such an empty person and so alone.

What came alive for me as I read the whole story, was the picture of a bitter old man who seemed to lack any dimension of forgiveness or any liberating freedom of the spirit. Here is a religious bully. Saul became an empty man—far too dependent upon Samuel for his religious undergirding. Saul is also too dependent on charismatic experiences; his faith is not a day by day sustaining power, but a thing of ups and downs, experiences and prophetic pronouncements.

With this background I ask you now to read the sermon and see if I managed to "bring them back alive."

TEXT: I Samuel 28:7

Not long ago on the late show, I saw a film I had been wanting to see for years. The film was "I Never Sang For My Father." Melvyn Douglas plays an aging father who loves his son, but who is eaten with bitterness. He dominates the son, who is played by the gifted actor, Gene Hackman. The son's predicament becomes acute when his mother dies, leaving the son to deal with his father who becomes more and more irascible and demanding. Finally, there is a break. The son realizes that he must live his own life and that he will never really break the bonds of bitterness which have settled over his father's final years. But at the end of the picture, the son gives an epilogue of how, through the ensuing years, he has kept in touch with his father and finally the old man dies. The son delivers that powerful line "death ends a life, but not a relationship."

I was reminded over and over again of that line and the story behind it, as I have been studying the life of the principal personality we are to meet on Mt. Gilboa. The tormented and haunted King Saul, first King of the Israelites. Big, handsome Saul, mighty in battle, brave and devout, but a man curiously empty at the center of his life.

Saul's story comes in one of those transition periods of Jewish history after the death of Moses on Mt. Nebo, and, under the leadership of Joshua, the conquest of the promised land takes place. The Israelites spread out, and after some very hard fighting took certain portions of the

land under the leadership of various strong men and women known as “Judges.” This “Time of the Judges” is hectic and dangerous and the people begin to long for some more centralized authority and leadership. This desire scandalizes the then most powerful holy man, Samuel—who is sometimes known as the “Last of the Judges and the First of the Prophets.” He feels that the people should have only one authority at the center of their lives—the Lord God.

Samuel becomes Saul’s mentor. He becomes the “angry father” to Saul’s “son seeking to please,” and Samuel carries the awful clout of speaking for God. Saul is an able leader in certain ways. He is fierce in battle. He unites the people and pushes the perimeters of his Kingdom into the borders of Philistine hegemony. But never in Saul’s time is there real peace. He is always in one battle after another.

He seems always to be displeasing Samuel, and thus, as Samuel sees it, God! This eats at Saul’s sense of security. He becomes more and more neurotic, seeking to “bluster” as King, to take things into his own control. Each time he does, Samuel is more and more enraged.

Then add to this the appearance of the flashing personality, David. Handsome, clever, brave, a born leader. The David who kills the giant Goliath. The David who is praised in the song—“Saul has killed his thousand, David has killed his tens of thousands.” Saul becomes emotionally unhinged and seeks to kill David in jealous rage.

And all the while, the break with Samuel is coming as sure as dark clouds rumbling at a distance on the horizon declare the coming of a storm. The break comes when Saul does not carry out a raid as Samuel has told him to. For this, Samuel denounces him and tells him he is abandoned by God.

That brings us to Mt. Gilboa the final night of Saul’s life. Samuel is dead, but death has not ended the relationship. His condemnation is still very much alive in Saul’s mind and heart. Saul and his three sons prepare for battle with the Philistine hoards who gathered across the valley from Mt. Gilboa. Mt. Gilboa is really a mountain range of about eight miles in length. The mountain is not high, only 1,698 feet. Its slopes will be the scene of the awful battle that will end Saul’s life and the lives of his three sons.

As darkness gathers on the mountain, Saul feels abandoned. Samuel is not there to tell him what to do. So we come upon the frightened aged Saul, in the beginning of a long night. Saul wants some word from God! But it is as if the skies have turned to brass, and God has turned away from him.

Our Scripture lesson tells the story well when it says, “When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly.” Saul inquired of the Lord—the Lord did not answer him—either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophecy. There were no dreams. No prophets stepping forth with a word from God. Then we come to that word “Urim.” No one is exactly sure what it is, but it is thought to be a part of some ornaments that hung from the Priest Ephod. A ceremonial breast-

plate. There is a Urim and Thummim. With these two flat stone ornaments it is thought that the “lot” was cast. The stones were white on one side, black on the other. They were thrown, and if two white sides came up it was “yes.” If two black sides came up it was “no.” I guess black and white meant “maybe” or “who knows.” We can imagine Saul after long hours of praying turning to the Urim casting and getting nothing but black and white!

Saul is frantic! He seems to have no inner strength at all. Without Samuel to pull the strings, he is like a puppet flopping about. Then it is that Saul calls out “find me a witch!” The Bible calls her a “medium.” One who calls up the dead. Now it is important to remember that the Scripture passage tells us that Saul cleared the land of witches following the command that witches and mediums were scandalous. They breed a superstitious spirit against the good of the people as they were told to follow God. But now Saul calls for a witch.

This brings about one of the most interesting scenes in the Old Testament—his interview with the “Witch of Endor.” It is classic, spiritualist hokum! Who does the witch bring back from the dead for Saul,—Samuel! How very predictable and sad it is that Saul longs to see Samuel, though he never really “sees” anything.

The witch sees “an old man in a robe coming up out of the earth.” The answer from the apparition is what we might expect—“Saul, you are doomed!” And after a whole day of not eating and a night of terror and tension, Saul collapses. He eats a little and goes back to Mt. Gilboa where the morning brings his death by falling on his own sword, becoming one of the few suicides in Scripture.

Mt. Gilboa is not a happy place. David laments about the place, crying out about the death of Saul and his good friend Jonathan. He says, “Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you. How the mighty have fallen!”

Now you may ask, what has all this to do with me? What can we learn from this tragedy?

It becomes clear that we need a faith in God that is personal, inside ourselves, not manipulated by someone else from the outside. Samuel surely must bear some of Saul’s tragedy, for he gave Saul not much of the love, kindness and care of God. This seemed to be beyond Samuel’s scope. But Saul and Samuel are of a desperate age that is true, but in some ways so are we. Thanks be to God we have seen Him through His son and the son has entered into us, and sets us free. For we know in Him we are loved and we can cry along with Paul “nothing can separate me from the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus.”

Saul also brings us a warning from what one scholar calls the “most human passage in the Bible—when Saul cries out, “get me a witch.” How often do we, in despair, turn toward those very things we know in our better times are wrong, or at least temporary and have no real life-giving power.

We talk of God’s power and love that will sustain us. Yet in times of trouble, we grab at all our security blankets, bank accounts, power,

prestige. We hold on to weapons of terror—we arm ourselves with feeble clubs. We deny with our actions the truth that the greatest weapon we have to defend ourselves is the human spirit inspired and strengthened by the living God! This was certainly revealed to us by our returnees from Iran who at times had only their strength of spirit to keep them going. I was impressed by a statement made by the ranking military man in the Iranian embassy who spoke at the Washington Cathedral celebration of Thanksgiving. He talked of the time when he had nothing for defense, not even his Bible, and at that moment he found God there sustaining him.

Saul's tragedy was that he seemed to be empty inside. He needed always God to come from someone else, never within himself. Mt. Gilboa calls to each of us to begin now to open our lives to God through his son Jesus Christ. To practice the presence of God, not the God that someone else tells us about, but the God we find for ourselves in Christ. Then we will not have to cry as Saul did. "Find me a witch!" "Find me some help!" Help that is a substitute for God. Such substitutes will have for us the same message as that phantom conjured up by the witch of Endor had for the empty soul of Saul!

Oh, my friends, "Our help is in the Lord, who made heaven and earth!" Our hope is the Christ who while we were yet sinners, died for us!" Such a hope can turn the Mt. Gilboa's of our lives into true places of victory!

Preaching in a Multi-Cultural Context

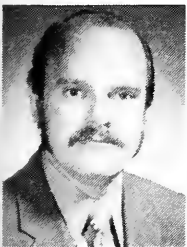
George E. Morris, D. Div.

The following presentation was given by Dr. Morris at the Minority Ministries Conference, sponsored by the Army Chief of Chaplains, in Atlanta, GA, this past April.

I face this opportunity with fear and trembling. In all honesty I cannot recall ever having to struggle more with a topic. I have never been in the military. Obviously, that, in and of itself, erects a major blockage to understanding. However, I have pastored a large downtown church in the upper midwest and know something of the challenge of trying to preach the Gospel in a multi-cultural context.

I suppose I feel very much like the Boy Scout leader who stopped at the farmer's gate one hot afternoon. The Scout leader's clothes were dirty and wet with perspiration. As he mopped his forehead with his hankerchief, he said to the farmer, "Did you see a Scout troop pass by here? I must find them, you see, I'm their leader!" I know perfectly well that I am not an expert in this subject. I am confident that many in this audience have had far more experience than I. Many of you are far, far down the road ahead of me. Therefore, I can only witness to what I know as a fellow pilgrim; one with dust on this clothes and perspiration on his brow. It is in this spirit that I dare to share my convictions with you. Let me begin by telling about a worship experience that happened recently in the Candler community.

The worship experience was led by the Black Caucus and was held in the chapel at the School of Theology. From the very beginning, when the pianist gave the introduction to the first hymn, I knew that we were in for a treat. Some of the songs that were sung were sung much slower than the whites in the audience were accustomed to singing them. Other songs had a faster rhythm but all of the music had a real "beat" to it. The blacks in the congregation began to sway and I found myself getting with the "beat" and enjoying it immensely. I looked around and most everyone in the congregation was right in there—swaying and singing. A black soloist sang "He'll Understand and Say 'Well Done.'" He poured his soul right through his voicebox, and it was a tremendously moving experience for everyone. I looked around and again, it was obvious that he had that congregation in the palm of his hands.



Dr. Morris is Associate Professor of Evangelism at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA. He previously served as Director of Proclamation Resourcing for the Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church.

The preacher for the day was a black woman. She read her text and began her sermon and the blacks in the audience began to answer back with rhythmic responses. She spoke with deep emotion and the more her colleagues “egged her on” the faster her cadence, the higher the pitch of her voice, and the louder the volume. In all honesty the content of her sermon was not all that terrific. Moreover, if there was any structure to that sermon at all, I was not able to sort it out. But, strangely enough, this did not present a major blockage for me and I found myself really getting into that event and wanting to move right along with the rhythmic flow of it. Then, I noticed something. Many in the congregation were not really with the preacher at all. You could tell by their body language that they were not only withdrawing from this situation but some were embarrassed and others were downright hostile. It was then that I saw one of my students. To protect her anonymity I shall call her “Mary Jo.” Mary Jo is a graduate of Yale College. She is a member of the United Church of Christ and was born and raised in a northeastern state. Splotches of red began to appear on her neck and the redness seemed to travel up her neck as her temperature rose. You could see in her eyes a mixture of anger, guilt, and embarrassment. When the time for the Lord’s Supper came, she walked out of the chapel and refused to take communion.

The next day I was seated in my office. There was a knock at the door and there stood Mary Jo. She said she just had to talk with me. She said, “Yesterday was one of the worst days of my life. That worship service tore me all to pieces. I couldn’t sleep last night and I still feel terrible today. I made it through the music all right but when the sermon started I found myself in a state of shock. Eventually that shock turned to anger and I just wanted to get out of there! I guess you noticed that I left without receiving communion. But, Dr. Morris, I just couldn’t stay there. To my mind it was all a big show and an insult to my intelligence. Nevertheless, I feel so guilty for having left. I’ve never done anything like that before in my life. I can’t believe that I did it! I’ve never refused to share the Lord’s Supper with anyone. I guess I’ve always prided myself in being so liberal, magnanimous and inclusive. Yet, in that setting, I found myself bombarded with opposite feelings. I felt so different from anyone else. I just simply couldn’t go up there and share the Lord’s Supper.” At this point Mary Jo broke down and wept.

After she regained her composure, she continued: “Quite frankly, Dr. Morris, I can’t figure *you* out! I looked over there and you seemed to be enjoying all of that! How could you?”

Now, I would like to use this encounter as a case study. Unless I am terribly mistaken it will enable us to get our minds around the issues that are germane to the basic theme of this study course.

I will ask, and attempt to answer, three basic questions. I realize that none of my responses are definitive. They are more like “hunches.” But, I trust that they will “tease out” an appropriate agenda for our panel discussion.

I. Why is it that one white responds negatively to this particular style of black preaching and another white responds positively?

Quite specifically, a part of the reason for our varying reactions was due to radically different historical and cultural conditioning. I was brought up in a typical tarpaper shack at the head of a remote hollow in the Southern Appalachian region. My father was a non-union coal miner. We were very poor. I was converted at seventeen in a typical mountain revival meeting. It was not unusual for people to shout for joy in our services. Moreover, if the preacher wasn't getting a chorus of "Amen's" he would have reason to believe that he had failed to preach the Gospel in that context. In many ways the white culture in the remote regions of Southern Appalachia has shared the oppressions of black Americans. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be definite affinities regarding their worship and preaching.

Mary Jo, on the other hand, was brought up in a typical high-steeple congregationalist church located in a small village in Connecticut. Her church has used the same liturgy for years. Her pastor, who has been there many years, gives serious attention to the Christian year and preaches from the lectionary. Therefore, if you heard this sermon on the second Sunday of Lent, 1981, it's possible that you will hear the same sermon on the same Sunday in 1982! As Mary Jo put it, "Everything is predictable. I have attended there all my life and cannot recall a single outward display of emotion. The sermons are more cognitive and careful attention is given to form or structure. There is a warmth in the worship environment, but it comes more from the aesthetic appeal of symbolism. I cannot remember our pastor ever having raised his voice at us. The only "Amen" ever sounded was either written into the liturgy or at the end of a hymn. But, you know I've thought about it. It's not just a matter of our service being ritualistic and their's not. I noticed a definite ritual in their service. When the preacher would say or do certain things in certain ways she seemed to get a predictable response from the other blacks. I guess I just like my ritual better." What can we learn from this?

This observation helps us see that Christian proclamation cannot be understood apart from particular cultural contexts. Our celebration and communication of the Gospel always takes place within a particular historical culture. Moreover, worship and preaching do not extract a person out of his/her inherited culture nor do they necessarily mean an automatic denial of one's past life. This means that Christian proclamation cannot be viewed as a transcultural or uncontextual event. Simply entering into a worship service with other believers does not mean that individual worshippers sever continuity with their own past.

This implies that it is necessary to understand and be able to interpret the particular historical-cultural context which serves as a framework for the proclamation of the Gospel. This is in keeping with the

historical nature of the Christian faith. Jesus, John the Baptist, and all of the prophets of the Old Testament were called at particular times, to a particular people in order to articulate a particular message. Of the call of John the Baptist it is said it happened “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.” Of Jesus it is said His birth took place “when Quirinius was governor of Syria.” The point of all this is that the revelations of God are never divorced from time. The Gospel attains its meaning, its crisis character, in and through history. It is because the early Christian preachers took their multi-faceted context with utter seriousness that they were delivered from the crippling uniformity which is often the burden of today’s Church. Though there was a basic homogeneity in the content of their message there was wide diversity in the way they made that message known. Most of that variety was evoked by their perceptions of the situations and the needs of their hearers. Therefore, it is not only appropriate but necessary for preachers to understand the historical and culture matrix which serves as the framework for their Gospel advocacy. If the situation is multi-cultural, then, obviously the demand for skills in cross-cultural communication becomes acute, and the need for variety enormous.

II. Why is it that a large number of whites have great difficulty in seeing the tremendous values in black preaching?

Obviously, I can only address this question from the white perspective! If I have understood my assignment, that is precisely my role in this study course. I hope that some of this will enable black chaplains to better understand the reaction on the part of some whites to their Gospel services. Here, I would like to discuss several “hang-ups” that you will find in most white audiences—most whites in general.

a. *The first “hang-up” has to do with the display of emotion.* In the white church no issue is more emotionally loaded than the issue of human emotion. Many of our churches have been fairly well split asunder on this issue. I mustn’t be overly simplistic, but there does seem to be two distinct camps in the white community. There are the *rationalists* who insist that emotion is either suspect, or worse, evil. Some even imply that emotion is inherently anti-intellectual. On the other hand there are the *emotionalists* who contend that all that is necessary is that the hearer “feel it in his heart.” For these persons content is secondary in importance. Unless I miss my bet the scales are generally tipped in favor of the *rationalists*, but the schism remains.

This split in some foggy way extends to us all the way from the eighteenth century. At that time Francis Bacon and George Campbell fashioned a school of thought called “faculty psychology.” In many ways, white orthodoxy’s analysis of human nature has assumed the categories of faculty psychology. The source of much of this understanding can be found in the ideas of Aristotle. Aristotle taught that the ground of individ-

ual human identity could be found in the person's rational capacity. Aristotle's philosophical basis was appropriated and integrated into doctrinal formulations. This tended to give orthodoxy's concept of religion a rationalistic flavor not found in the New Testament. This rationalistic flavor was buttressed by the categories of faculty psychology. According to *this* understanding, the individual is a composite of distinct, separate parts or faculties which can be dealt with as separate units. Once faculty psychology was appropriated by the church it became necessary to draw sharp distinctions between the material body and the spiritual-rationalistic soul; between the affective and the cognitive. Primarily, the soul reveals itself in the activity of the *mind*. This is one reason why white orthodox Christianity tends to be a matter of belief or giving mental assent to a list of doctrinal statements.

Arguments from creation were employed to buttress Aristotle's concept of the rational soul. The rational soul as the distinctive human faculty was equated with the biblical idea of the image of God in the human being. Whereas the Bible speaks of the whole Adam being created in God's image, this perspective tended to think of the image as a particular aspect or faculty in Adam's composite being. Moreover, this interpretation assumed that "Adam" meant individual man rather than humankind. Thus, according to this position, God breathed into each individual an immortal rational soul, and it is that soul which is of infinite worth, not the total person. As you see, this is a terrible misunderstanding!

Actually, it is humankind that stands at the pinnacle of God's creative process and not the perfected, rational, individual male of Aristotelian philosophy. Moreover, a serious look at the creation accounts will reveal that human beings in the totality of their psycho-social selves were made in the image of God. So the image of God is not a special rational or spiritual faculty breathed into the human being. When God breathed into us the breath of life we became living *whole* beings (*nefesh*) and God looked at us in our totality and said, "Good." The human being is an animated body, a wholeness which cannot really be separated.

Though I do not fully understand the reasons why, I have a hunch that the black community has not bought into this Aristotelian bifurcation of the human being. If I am correct, then the black Church has a great opportunity for helping whites recover biblical wholeness. Moreover, there is hope in the white community. We now know that faculty psychology is inadequate. You simply cannot compartmentalize the human being. People do have certain mental faculties and psychic behavior patterns that can be roughly classified, but these faculties are quite interwoven and interdependent. They influence each other. When you engage one, you affect them all. Many are aware of this, and as a result, even white preachers are beginning to realize that preaching must address the whole person. People must not only understand the truth, they must feel truth in their bones. The whole person must be brought into the picture. If blacks and whites can continue to be patient and remain open to one another the time is ripe for great advances. I am noticing that many whites are coming

to the realization that preaching is more than a cognitive exercise. It is a revelatory event. I do believe that there is a growing appreciation from within the white community for the affective aspect of preaching.

b. Another "hang up" in the white community is the seeming tension between structured and unstructured or narrative style preaching. If you take seriously what I have just said regarding an imbalance of the emphasis upon the cognitive and rational, you can understand why this tension exists. With the growing popularity of the narrative style, I expect this tension to reach even greater intensity.

Allow me to share out of my own personal experience. I served for nine years on one of the national boards of our denomination. As I traveled all over this country and listened to hundreds of laity complaining about their preachers, one cluster of complaints was sounded again and again: "I can't follow him. You never know where he is going. He's not clear. When he has finished his sermon, no one seems to know what he was trying to say!" Now, these complaints were made by both whites and blacks regarding both white and black preachers. I suppose that one could say "It's possible that their preachers simply didn't know what they were trying to say," but more than likely, their basic problem was one of structure. Many preachers have not learned how to structure their message with any level of clarity. Some have not even learned the vital lesson that the form of the sermon must be fashioned in terms of the content. Since they do not know this, they employ the old "cookie cutter" approach to every sermon. Every sermon must have three points and a poem. This formula is stamped upon every text with total disregard to what the text is trying to say and the manner in which it tries to say it. Others fall into the trap of assuming that the sermon needs no form-structure. Some try to hide this shortcoming under the guise of a narrative style. Therefore, they string together a whole bunch of unrelated Scripture verses and a whole bunch of equally unrelated stories. The result is an almost predictable confusion in their auditors.

Here I have tried to put together some basic suggestions about form or structure that will facilitate communication without doing irreparable damage to an exciting narrative style. My experience has taught me that there are basically three forms of sermon structure. All of these can be employed in narration.

1. One is called a "linkage" pattern. This is the natural form where the ideas are interdependent and linked together in such a way that the hearer must be confronted with point one before he/she can adequately understand point two. Several biblical texts presuppose this linkage. For instance: we should love others as God loved us. Or, we are to forgive others as God has forgiven us. The sequence of these ideas must be taken with absolute seriousness whether the preacher employs a wooden mechanical style or the more fluid narrative style.

2. The second basic approach to structuring one's sermon might be called "parallel organization." Here the main ideas in the sermon are not necessarily dependent on each other; each point can stand on its own, and

it may not seem to make a great deal of difference which order they come in. Yet, even here the preacher can work to facilitate clarity. He/she can begin with the point that is easiest to understand or the point that is easiest to accept and then go on to the more difficult points. In parallel structure it is usually important to make the most important point your last point. Usually the last point is the one most easily and vividly retained by the hearer.

3. The third basic structure is what some have called the “psychological order.” Here the attempt is made to structure the sermon in a way commensurate with the way people normally think. Alan Monroe, the great twentieth century speech theorist, has developed what he calls the “motivated sequence.” He contends that there are five stages that a speaker can use in planning his sermon: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action. Once you have gotten the attention of your congregation it is necessary to highlight some basic human need. Then, the preacher proceeds to show how the Gospel satisfies that need. Once this is done it is helpful to enable the audience to visualize this process. This is often accomplished by way of dramatization. The visualization step projects the audience into the future so that they are emotionally impressed with an image of future conditions. The greatest example of this technique was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remember his address on “I Have a Dream” delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963? Even today, when I listen to a recording of that sermon, my skin has “goosepimples” all over! In that speech King projected his hearers into the future. His language was so grandiose that most preachers couldn’t handle it, but he did it magnificently. He demonstrated that by sharing his vision, the people actually dreamed the dream with him. Therefore, his message stood up and walked in their minds and hearts, and those people who heard it—really heard it—were never quite the same. They took action and were willing to participate with God in the realization of His dream for history. That kind of preaching will get a hearing. It not only engages the hearer, it both anticipates and shapes the future. Sufficient to say, effective preaching demands that we give some attention to structure.

c. *A third “hang-up” has to do with the reluctance to listen to authority figures.* There is a growing dislike of authority in our country and a strong tendency to undermine it and turn away from it. There is a supersensitiveness that is super quick to recognize the use and abuse of authority, and any attempt by individuals to take themselves too seriously. Often this sensitiveness finds expression in a wry sort of humor that keeps the high and mighty cut down to size. This is why it is getting increasingly precarious to be a politician in this country.

Preaching is related to authority. In most denominations the ordination ritual contains some such words as: “Receive thou authority to preach the Gospel” or “Take thou authority to preach the Word of God in the Church of Jesus Christ.” In other words, the Church invests all of us with the authority to preach. Unfortunately, some preachers overplay the significance of this investiture. They forget that the investiture comes from

the Church. They assume that their authority has been given by God. Forgetting the incarnational principle, they tend to remain above their people and talk down at them.

Added to this is the insidious power of white racism. If whites have a growing tendency to resist other whites who speak authoritatively, that resistance is considerably multiplied when they hear a black speaking authoritatively. Moreover, I suspect that this is again compounded when issues of rank and decorum, which are a part of military life, are plowed into this mixture.

d. *Another "hang-up" comes from the fact that whites, for the most part, are more "clockeyed" than blacks.* It doesn't matter who is preaching—a large number of whites in the audience will be constantly consulting their watches. It is an automatic response. Technocracy seems to have dominated our lives. Jacques Ellul says, "It begins to appear that a new necessity is taking over from the old. It is easy to boast of victory over ancient oppression, but what if victory has been gained at the price of an even greater subjection to the forces of the technical society which has come to dominate our lives?" Secularization has bequeathed to us a quantification of time. We have become prisoners to the clock. This destroys spontaneity, erodes our freedom and imposes on us an alien, mechanical pattern quite different from the rhythms of nature which follow sunrise and sunset, springtime and harvest. We have allowed chronos time to supplant kairos time. Therefore, for most whites, time is on a continuum. Rather than expressing a structure which allows for the "right time" for something to happen in terms of the rhythms of life, time for us is quantified. This creates a "busy syndrome." We are so busy making a living that we fail to make a life. Therefore, worship must be kept exactly within the hour, and people are constantly watching their watches. They just can't wait to get out of that place in order to be about "important" things, and it is hard for whites to understand why it is that some black worship seems to go on and on and on. This brings us to—

III. What clues are available for preaching in a multi-cultural context?

Now the challenge of preaching is difficult enough when the preacher is faced with a fairly solid homogenous audience. However, in a heterogeneous culture which reminds one of a multi-colored mosaic the challenge become enormous. No place would this challenge be greater than in the United States Armed Forces.

On the other hand, where could one find a greater opportunity to celebrate the rich diversity of our culture without attempting to level all cultures into a colorless uniformity? And where could one find a greater opportunity to highlight and illustrate the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Ephesians teaches us that Christ has demolished the dividing walls of hatred, scorn and disrespect, but that's not all; Christ has done more. We all know that the wall dividing Jew from Gentile was not only their active reciprocal hatred; it was also their racial and religious alienation.

This, too, Jesus Christ has abolished in order to “create in Himself a single new humanity or one humanity in place of two, so making peace (Ephesians 2:15).” This does not mean that Jews cease to be Jews or Gentiles cease to be Gentiles. It means that their racial differences are no longer barriers to their fellowship. The New Testament warns us against the serious danger of permitting any kind of apartheid in the Christian fellowship (Romans 15:7 and Galatians 2:11-16).

First, I would insist that the Bible admonishes us to focus on ultimate rather than penultimate concerns. Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, philosopher, and mystic tells a story of a man, who while walking in the woods one day, suddenly comes upon a ferocious tiger. In desperation the man leaps into a pit only to discover that the pit is bottomless. However, he manages to grasp a tiny branch protruding from the side of the pit and there he dangles, suspended between a bottomless pit below and a growling tiger above. Then, much to his chagrin, a tiny mouse comes out on the limb and begins to gnaw away at the branch, his only grasp on life. With time running out the doomed man notices that the leaves on the branch are coated with honey. So, he begins to lick the honey from the leaves.

For Tolstoy, this graphic illustration depicts a fundamental human flaw. Continually threatened by death, with time running out, people are tempted to distract themselves from their real situation by licking honey. They avoid the ultimate by occupying themselves with penultimate concerns. In so doing, human triviality overcomes fundamental reality. They lose sight of the whole picture by concentrating on a tiny facet of their own cultural situations or tradition.

It is possible so to concentrate our attention on the particulars of our own historical and cultural traditions, those things that make us different, that we lose sight of those towering convictions that are ultimately shared by all. We lick the leaves of the penultimate. We major on the minors and lose sight of those ultimate truths that stand upon the horizon of our existence and command our attention. It is the ultimate concerns of life that give our lives centeredness; that help us integrate the scattered bits of existence into some coherent whole. Without ultimacy we are all very much like the little boy who goes out behind the barn with his bow and arrow. He puts the arrow in the bow, pulls it back, lets it fly, and wherever it hits he draws a ring around it. He is not shooting at anything in particular—just shooting!

God’s revelation in Christ is the ultimate for the Christian community. Paul said, “For me to live is Christ.” And again he said, “Christ means life to me.” If we could all center our attention in Christ—keep our eyes focused on Him, many of our particular differences would cease to occupy center stage and we would find ourselves coming together around Him.

A second clue for preaching in a multi-cultural context is the mandate to take WHOLENESS seriously. As preachers we are mandated to engage whole persons in their whole world with the whole Gospel. This is more than a cliché. It is an undeniable mandate which must be affirmed

more conscientiously today than ever. For much that masquerades today under the title of the “true” Gospel or the “full” Gospel is certainly not the whole Gospel. But, how can we view the faith from a “total” perspective? I would like for us to face up to God’s mandate for “wholeness” via an Old Testament word “*shalom*.”

The Hebrew word *shalom* attempts to embody the biblical vision of God’s central, full and ultimate intention for all His creation. This central vision or intention proclaims that God’s will for universal reconciliation is at the heart of all biblical revelation. In the Old Testament this vision is expressed in the affirmation that Abraham is father of all Israel and every person is his child. Thus, Israel has a vision of all persons drawn into community around the will of God. In the New Testament, the Church has a vision of all persons drawn together into a single community under the Lordship and fellowship of Christ.

The unfolding of biblical history highlights God’s struggle to establish reconciling peace, freedom and wholeness with humanity, among humankind, within persons, and between humans and nature.

This vision is so “total” that no one word is sufficient to express it. However, the word which best summarizes what God envisions, and the one which helps us see the biblical faith from a “total” perspective, is the word *shalom*. Many English words are required in order to express the meaning of *shalom*. It means wholeness, well-being, freedom, community, justice, peace, unity, harmony and health. Though the word has diverse meanings, it does manifest certain consistent meanings throughout the Bible. I would like to list seven of those consistent meanings.

1. *Shalom* always retains its sense of wholeness and well-being. Wholeness, here, means “completeness,” “fullness” and “unity.” This wholeness and well-being can be of a personal sort, but never at the expense of communal well-being. Since *shalom* affirms the interdependence of people it is never adequate to see it in terms of isolated or insulated individuals. *Shalom* is deliberately corporate. It always stresses active relationships between and among persons.

2. *Shalom* envisions a relationship of peace for all of creation. It not only affirms the interdependence of the human family, but the interdependence of humans, other creatures, and the whole ecological environment.

3. Since this blessing of God is intended for all of God’s creation, God’s will is thwarted when some of His creation are “put down” or “oppressed.” Thus, a concern for justice and integrity for all is an integral part of God’s dream. Military, economic, racial, social and political oppression are against God’s dream of *shalom*.

4. The biblical faith affirms that this *shalom* can come only as the world relates to God and His will. Wholeness, then, is an outgrowth of a covenant between God and humanity. In this covenant people are not only bound to God but to each other in a caring, sharing, rejoicing community.

5. This *shalom* is the promise of God for this world and the next. It is more than bleary-eyed dreaming about a “never, never” world, it is the fulfillment of God’s intention for this world. It is a new order of life, which is available now as a foretaste of what is to come.

6. The advent of Jesus Christ is crucial for the Christian’s understanding of *shalom*. His birth was welcomed with the words “peace on earth...” He is the fulfillment of the messianic hopes of the Old Testament. He inaugurates the reign of God. Paul tells us that God’s *shalom* comes to us through Jesus Christ. He heals our separations from God, from one another and from nature. He is our *shalom*.

7. Finally, though the Christian knows only fragments or “first fruits” of *shalom* at the present, the call and gift of *shalom* are the invitation to participate with God in the effecting of peace. Indeed, the Christian can never fully know the *shalom* of God until all people know it. For one of the relational meanings of *shalom* is what affects my brother or sister affects me. Christians must, therefore, seek after *shalom* knowing that God’s own action will bring the promise to fulfillment. Christians are responsible to expect and demonstrate the whole or total salvation that God wills for all His creation.

The time has come for the whole Church to envision a faith that embraces the totality of existence; that incorporates God’s own dream for His creation. The time has come for preachers to measure their Gospel preaching over against God’s vision of universal reconciliation. This means that we must dispense with our attempts to compartmentalize life and the Gospel. We have, at times, lifted out certain facets of life and the Gospel and proclaimed them as the whole package. Some have even been guilty of setting one facet over against the other, as if they were in competition with one another. Thus we have separated a person’s relationship to God from his relationship to history, his soul from his total life, his salvation from his service, his decision for Christ from his decision for humanity. We have made neat separations between the Church’s ministries in evangelism and its involvements in social actions; between the ministry of reconciliation and that of liberation; between Damascus Road experiences and Jericho Road ministries. We have highlighted these aspects as separate entities rather than presenting them in terms of how they relate to the whole of God’s revelation and the totality of His will. In so doing, we have fragmented life and the Gospel, and we must now bring our resources to bear upon correcting this heresy and discovering “wholeness.” Until we reach this “wholeness” we will continue to dissipate our energies, coping and contending with one another—like a field hospital in a war zone where the supplies are few and the wounded many but where the medical staff consumes its energy in argumentation and debate.

Finally, if we are to preach in a multi-cultural context, we will surely have to give serious attention to the INCARNATION. To my mind, this is the most important clue to any form of Christian communication. Let your imagination run free and go with me for just a few minutes.

A ship is at sea and a man is overboard and he is going down for the third and final time. All that can be seen is a hand extended above the water. There are different pastors standing along the railing of the ship giving this drowning man advice. There is a moralist who sees the plight of the drowning man and very quickly reaches into his attache case and pulls out a book on how to be a good swimmer in ten easy lessons. He tosses the book to the man with the instruction that he should read the book, memorize the rules, and everything will be all right. But, that doesn't help a drowning man. Another pastor could be called an institutional bureaucrat. Upon seeing the drowning man this person yells out, "Just hold on, brother, and we will call a committee meeting and dialogue your dilemma. This committee will in turn appoint another committee to study your situation and if funds are sufficient, and your situation merits top priority attention, a third committee will be appointed to engage in the act of rescuing you." Of course the man dies a thousand deaths! There is another pastor there from the school of positive thought. This person sees the drowning man and his heart aches with compassion. He yells out, "But sir, can't you understand? You are not really drowning at all, it is just in your head! Think dry!" Obviously that kind of instruction doesn't help a drowning man. There is a pastor standing along the railing that I would call a traditional revivalist. Now I am assuming that there are some revivalists who are genuinely creative persons. However, this man is a revivalist who hasn't thought a creative thought in 20 years. He is imprisoned to certain stereotype patterns and ideas. He sees the plight of the drowning man and automatically his whole demeanor and voice change. When he sees the hand raised above the surface of the water, his voice takes on a note of sacred shakiness; a sort of holy quiver, and he says sanctimoniously, "Yes, brother, I see that hand. Are there others?" To be sure, that doesn't help a drowning man. But, finally, there is a realist on board that ship. The realist is fully cognizant of the danger involved but it does not deter him. He rips off his outer garments, leaps into the icy water, and engages in the act of rescuing the man at the risk of his own life.

Our doctrine of the Incarnation instructs us that God has played the role of the realist. He has placed himself right in the midst of life where people live and die, sweat and smell. And, if we are to follow this missionary God, we must be willing to place ourselves in the midst of this world and identify ourselves with the sufferings of humanity.

You see, the basic clue for communication of the Gospel comes from God. How did God communicate with us? God didn't send us a tract, God sent Himself. The word of communication that makes Christianity distinctive is a Word-Event, an event in which God takes initiative and gives Himself to humanity through a particular person—Jesus of Nazareth. In this communication God does not communicate something about Himself—God communicates Himself.

Here is the basic clue to all Christian communication. Christian communication calls for deep involvement in the real dilemmas of real

people. Jesus not only preached, he walked the roads with people. This makes clear that the Gospel is more than a verbal message to be proclaimed through words; rather the Gospel includes the *method* by which God communicates Himself. Message and method, content and relationship are linked in the Gospel. This means that we cannot share Gospel with people without sharing life with people. We cannot share Word without sharing world. Communion and communication are linked in the Gospel. This is why Gospel preaching demands relationship.

Without relationships our words are little more than chatter. Without relationships the preacher becomes a colporteur of words and his motto is: "Have words, will drive." Sometimes this willingness to give ourselves in relationship will get us nailed to a Cross. But how else can we follow the One who took "upon himself the form of a servant and dwelt among us?"

It Can Be Done

William E. Jacobs

Editor's Note: William Jacobs' article, and the following one by Richard Hicks, have been reprinted because of their relevance to the ministries of many chaplains. Although both address the topic in the context of the college campus, there are many similarities to the military environment.

"You have to do something about all these Black students who come here with a strong faith and then lose it. Some are even becoming Black Muslims." So were the words of a residence student advisor who was about to graduate and enter seminary.

In twenty-three years of campus ministry, I have avoided any major effort in ministry with Blacks. After all, I am completely handicapped by a white skin. There is no hope. Occasionally, a Black student will wander into our regular programs for awhile and then drop out. For ten years I have taught a course on *Racism and Poverty* in the Experimental College of Kent State University and have felt good when I've been hailed across campus by resounding *hi's* from acquaintances in those classes. A few counseling sessions came through. How could I expect to do more?

But that RSA's concern bothered me enough to talk it over with the Black assistant dean for human relations in the university, a long-time friend. He was not sure anything would work either, but he agreed to call together six or seven concerned Black students.

I have seldom felt so uncomfortable as when I walked into the room where the assistant dean and six students sat. They had been talking animatedly before I arrived, and the conversation stopped dead. They just looked at me. Was it hostility? Curiosity? Or simply mutual discomfort?

The assistant dean explained my presence, my concern that most Black students did not have meaningful worship opportunities, my suggestion that a Black minister might come to lead special worship on alternate Sunday afternoons, my willingness to be with them in any other kinds of groups they might want.

The awkwardness continued for three more meetings after that, while I mostly listened and asked a few questions. The assistant dean had good rapport with them, but finally said that he would have to drop out. I would be their advisor. That gave me a sinking feeling, but warmth and acceptance seemed to be growing.



William Jacobs is campus minister with United Christian Ministries at Kent State University, Ohio.

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We laid plans for the first Sunday afternoon Black worship. The usual efforts at planning publicity, location, contact with the Black minister and his choir all came together. The students invited other friends to join them in the planning meetings. After years of dealing with white students whose faith was dead long before they came to campus, I found the obvious commitment and the genuine joy of the Black students' religious perceptions most refreshing.

They decided to become a recognized student organization and came up with the name, *The ABC's of Salvation*. Several attempts at Sunday afternoon worship fell through because the minister backed out at the last minute. I couldn't blame the ministers, because we have no money to offer them.

It was suggested that we have "fellowship" on Wednesday evenings. I offered our student center. They were not sure, but investigated the chapel and lounge. They fell in love with the center and fellowship became a regular feature. I thought in my ignorance that it would be the usual fun and games of white students, but I found it to be a rousing Bible study (quite foreign to me), testimonial time, and praying (like no prayers I had heard before).

Black ministers from Akron responded to my "call from Macedonia" for help. Three of them agreed to come on alternate Wednesday nights. They were even open enough to accept my "testimonial" and my praying, although it certainly was not as lively as theirs.

The group kept growing as friends were invited. Counseling cropped up as trust developed. Every-other-week bake sales became evangelization efforts in the Center for Pan African Affairs. A car wash made some money also, so we could pay for the mike and other arrangements in the student center for the Black worship. Sixty-five students came to the first worship experience. I asked one of the members of my class what he thought of it. His criticism was that it was too short—only an hour-and-a-half long!

A basketball team was formed with specially printed t-shirts. I came to two games in which they lost by one point. But we had to kneel on the floor of the gym afterward and hold hands, the men and their women cheerleaders. They wanted me to pray but I suggested that someone else do it. One man prayed, "Lord, you have been with us in joy and you have been with us in adversity. Now we will learn through this adversity." Another man said, "Yeah, we ought to learn that we should practice more." The other games I missed were won by 20 points each. That says something, but I'm not sure what.

The group grew and I had a hard time keeping up. They wanted another fellowship on Friday nights. They set up a table in the student center and 59 persons signed up for the Black gospel choir for Thursday nights. They wanted to use our chapel. Picnics were planned. The bake sale was to be a weekly affair. But I found that my presence was not necessary. Their life grew and expanded with my increased absences.

One of the Black ministers from Akron agreed to teach a course on *The Black Church—An Authentic Christian Religion* in the Experimental College. Two other Black ministers called me to help. We were able to co-sponsor the visit of the Rev. John Perkins of the Voice of Calvary in Mississippi. Mr. Perkins gained the respect not only of faculty and students, but also of the head of the Center for Pan African Affairs, and even made an appearance at Hillel. His openly expressed evangelical faith, tied with his social action efforts and experiences, gained him a return invitation.

Some things bother me, though. I cannot accept their version of Bible study, of picking Bible verses out of context around themes. But they are so devoted to that endeavor, who am I to say it is not effective?

The social dimension of the gospel is largely mission. Occasionally, I have been able to introduce a topic such as registration and the draft since I am advisor to CARD, or talk about my efforts at raising consciousness concerning racism in the dorms. They have joined in the conversations as enthusiastically as ever. But their primary love is individual witnessing and personal conversion. Maybe, if I can restrain myself, further discussion will flow.

But when it is all said and done, the group is one of effervescence and vitality which I have seldom, if ever, experienced elsewhere. I am not sure if my hearing will be permanently impaired from the worship. Failures have abounded. The Black gospel choir disbanded after four practices since the leader was on the track team. Sometimes the ministers have failed to show. There have been tensions within the group.

But when the woman prayed, "Lord, I have been praying for a group like this four years" and fervent "Amen's" follow, I know deeply that it is worthwhile. That young woman performed a sacred dance that had a mighty impact on the evangelical Religious Awareness Week. She received entrance into the highest honorary on campus. She is about to attend Yale Divinity School.

The ABC's of Salvation received several recognitions from the Black United Students as being the most meritorious new organization on campus. It did not hurt that the president of BUS is a dedicated Christian, although he could not find the time to join the activities. He was too busy leading a march from the football stadium protesting racism on the football team during Parents' Weekend.

We even temporarily overcame the separation of the races at our pre-Christmas banquet when eleven of them hesitantly came to hear the Black Dean for Student Affairs give a Christmas message. He turned down two other invitations to be with us.

They even insisted on meeting throughout the summer in fellowship, and put together a car wash and a picnic. No rest for the weary. The Black gospel choir *will* be formed, so I have been grimly told.

Restraint on my part is the main effort. I just remind myself to get out of their way and let them do their thing. Maybe the bubble will burst,

but I can keep rejoicing over the exceptional warmth and acceptance, the exuberance of spirit and friendship, and the genuineness of laughter and joy in the midst of a past of suffering that has been rare in my ministry and other aspects of my life. Truly, the Black church has much to teach the rest of us.

A Black Campus Minister Responds

Richard Hicks

Editor's Note: Richard Hicks' article, and the previous one by William E. Jacobs, have been reprinted because of their relevance to the ministries of many chaplains. Although both address the topic in the context of the college campus, there are many similarities to the military environment.

Some Observations

First, I want to say how much I appreciate Brother Jacobs' testimony. *It Can Be Done* is an appropriate title for his paper. I appreciate the fact that he was bothered by the comment made by the residence student advisor who was concerned about a lack of ministry among Blacks at Kent State. I am very pleased that Brother Jacobs became involved and that his involvement not only resulted in many positive changes, but that he learned and grew from the experience himself.

Over the years I have heard many of my white colleagues express reservations about working with Blacks. They hide behind their whiteness to avoid involvement. The rationale is almost always the same: "I am white and Blacks will not trust me," or "Whites and Blacks are different culturally. I couldn't relate to them, nor they to me." But my guess is that the real problem is that whites are often literally afraid to be involved with Blacks and it is easier for them to use the race/culture issues to avoid involvement than it is to make a real (and often sacrificial) effort to relate to people who are different in some ways.

Brother Jacobs, I think, speaks for many white campus ministers when he says that in twenty-three years of campus ministry he has "avoided any major effort in ministry with Blacks." The word *avoided* should be underscored, for it is a conscious decision on the part of many whites not to become involved with Blacks.

I think that Black people understand whites far better than whites understand Blacks. We understand some of the guilt and fears that white people have regarding Blacks. As for fear, it seems that Blacks have much more justification for being afraid of whites than the other way around. The history of this country demonstrates the fact that whites have done much more violence to Blacks than vice versa. That is why it is amusing to read of Brother Jacobs' discomfort when he walked into the room where



Richard Hicks, until his recent move to a parish in Maryland, was campus minister at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

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the assistant dean and six students sat. Just six students! And the “sinking feeling” he had when that Black assistant dean dropped out of the group. I wonder how he and other whites think 200 Black students feel on a campus of 15,000-20,000 whites!

Again, Brother Jacobs’ experiences and feelings are shared by a great many of his white colleagues. And I think Black people sense and resent this irrational fear. If white campus ministers can overcome it, or at least be honest about it when they interact with Blacks, it will be much easier for them to have the kind of positive and productive experiences Brother Jacobs now enjoys. I applaud, again, Brother Jacobs’ honesty and efforts.

Problems of White Ministers in Relating to Blacks

One of the major obstacles that whites face in ministering to Blacks (in addition to the fear described above) has to do with definitions of ministry. Many of my white colleagues have heard me say repeatedly that participation of Blacks in white student fellowship groups, Bible study groups, and other programs should not be the measure of success or failure of ministry to Blacks. There are cultural differences between Blacks and whites, differences which should be affirmed. But they should not preclude the possibility of whites and Blacks working together around issues and in programs that are mutually beneficial and rewarding. Neither should a white campus minister narrowly define his or her ministry with Blacks along those lines. Rather, very often ministry should be one of advocacy or of ombudsman/broker. Making a place available for Blacks to hold meetings or have gospel choir rehearsal; dealing with racist admissions policies; confronting the racism in dormitories that often makes living conditions for Black students very uncomfortable; these are some areas of possible involvement. Black students on predominantly white campuses need all the friends they can get. And if a white campus minister truly has a sympathetic ear and a willingness to try to improve conditions for Blacks, he or she will have no difficulty at all gaining their trust and confidence.

Black students have very little difficulty dealing with whites. Again, it is the other way around. The faculties, for instance, of most predominantly Black colleges are between 25 and 35 percent white. Very few, if any, Black students get through college without coming into direct contact with white faculty and administrators, no matter where they go to school. In fact, most presidents of Black colleges were white until the mid-1920’s. When I was in college (Hampton Institute, which is Black), the chaplain was white, the chairmen of the art, music, history, and elementary education departments were white. So long as they demonstrated an interest in us as students, we had no difficulty relating to them. Even the upheavals of the 1960’s did not significantly reduce the number of white faculty on Black campuses, although they did result in an increase in the number of Blacks on white campuses. I suspect, though I have no data to prove it, that with the Black *brain drain* after the ’60s, even more white teachers found their

way to Black campuses.

So the fear that many white campus ministers have that they cannot work with Blacks is not justified. And once these people begin to understand that their role with Blacks should not be limited to Christian nurture (even though Blacks will accept the white campus minister as priest and pastor once trust is built), but should focus on Black empowerment and enabling Blacks to survive educationally and socially in a white environment, then their ministry will take on a new meaning.

There are several models of effective ministry to Blacks on predominantly white campuses in this country. One is the ministry at Fairmont State College in West Virginia, where Richard Bowyer, a white United Methodist, is campus minister. Dick, in the early stages of his ministry, developed a solid theological rationale for his involvement with Blacks. He made a conscious decision and commitment to minister to *all* the people at the college. Second, he consciously avoided imposing his own culture and values on them. Rather, he joined them where they were and used his resources and personal skills to help them reach goals and objectives that they had set and which were important to them. He affirmed them as people. And he affirmed their style of worship. Third, he helped to expose his board, Black faculty, and students to experiences which helped them grow in their awareness of who they are as Blacks and what their role should be as Black Christians. For example, he made it possible for Black students to attend the annual convocations of Ministries to Blacks in Higher Education. Dick himself attends these meetings in order to enhance his own growth and development. He is trusted by Black people at Fairmont. In fact, he even pastors a small Black congregation in that city and brings in Black speakers and resource persons to work with both his students and congregation.

Another example is the Black Ministries Program in Western Pennsylvania which is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Commission for United Ministries in Higher Education. A few years ago, David Rich, the executive director of the commission, invited me and Dr. Frank Horton to come to Western Pennsylvania during a self-study and evaluation of the ministry to Blacks, which had previously been conducted by Black seminarians at Pittsburg Theological Seminary and funded by Pennsylvania UMHE. Frank and I visited several schools in the region, talked to Black students, faculty, student advisors, white campus ministers, and other interested persons such as Black United Methodist Bishop Ray Nichols and Dr. David Shannon, who at that time was dean of the seminary.

From our findings, we made certain recommendations to the UMHE commission. As a result, the commission organized a Black Advisory Board with Bishop Nichols and Dr. Shannon providing significant leadership. They identified key Black lay persons from the communities and on the campuses, who agreed to work with students (many of whom had already been involved). A session was held in Pittsburg which brought all these Black lay persons together for some basic training in campus

ministry. Program funds and small stipends were provided by Pennsylvania UMHE. The ministry took off. White campus ministers serve as resource persons for the lay people involved in the ministry.

The Western Pennsylvania model is a perfect example of what can be done. The key ingredient was the UMHE commission's commitment. They made ministry among Blacks a very high priority and used some creative imagination, as well as help from various sectors of the Black community. A significant and successful ministry resulted.

To summarize, if whites want to minister to Blacks, they can. They must first of all deal with their own irrational fear. Then they must make a commitment. They must not impose their own cultural and religious values on Blacks, but rather must be willing to assist them in identifying and reaching their goals. They must be willing to seek out and make use of resources in the Black community and not feel threatened or rejected because Blacks prefer a different style of worship from their own. And they must broaden the scope of their ministry to include advocacy/ombudsman/broker roles.

The Needs of Black College Students

It is obvious that the needs of Black students on predominantly white campuses differ from those on predominantly Black campuses. These needs stem from the differences between the institutions themselves, as well as from the racial makeup of the student body.

In very large, urban campuses such as Ohio State, Michigan University, UCLA, and others, even though Blacks face severe problems, they are not as critical as the problems they face at smaller institutions. This is so because there are significant numbers of Black students who find support from each other. In addition, they are in urban centers where social contracts are not confined to campus. For instance, my daughter entered graduate school at Ohio State University last fall. Even before getting there she was contacted by the Black Graduate Student Alliance, which would help her make the adjustment on campus, as well as socially.

But at residential, small-town, or rural campuses, as well as at major southern universities, the Black enrollment is still very small. For example, about three years ago I visited Clemson University in South Carolina, where the Black student population was about 200 out of a total of around 10,000. Campuses such as Penn State University, in central Pennsylvania, which are far from the major urban centers and where there are very few Blacks in the surrounding communities, pose problems for Blacks.

Frequently, the major complaint of Black students on these isolated residential campus centers around racism among administrators, faculty, and students, social isolation, and lack of political power. These problems are compounded when, as is the case on far too many campuses, most of the Black students are male athletes who have been heavily recruited.

Problems around interracial dating and other social issues prove very difficult. Very often the colleges or universities make no effort to meet the special needs of these people who are expected to live, work, and study in this very special, and often hostile, environment.

Black students on Black campuses also have needs, but they tend to center on practical matters such as finances and inadequate facilities. These students are surrounded by concerned faculty and social groups with whom they can relate. As one Black student at Fort Valley State University in Georgia told me: "Here at the Valley we have lots of problems. Poor facilities, poor food, a state legislature that refuses to appropriate enough money. But one problem we don't have to face here on a day-to-day basis is racism. All the students here are Black!"

Despite the handicaps faced by Black students at many predominantly Black schools (especially those supported by the state), the success of these schools is almost miraculous. Almost 70 percent of all Blacks enrolled in college attend predominantly white schools. Yet only about 30 percent of all Black college graduates are graduates from them, which means, of course, that 70 percent graduate from Black colleges. In fact, many Blacks who experience the *revolving door* at white schools (which often admit them just to meet government requirements and thereby qualify for federal funds), transfer to Black schools where they are highly successful. And, to anticipate the claim that their success results from inferior education and academic standards, the success rate of Black students from these schools who attend graduate school is equal or better than that of students, white or Black, who graduate from predominantly white schools.

So, the problems are different. For the campus minister at a predominantly white school, a multi-faceted ministry is required, while at Black schools, ministers generally can focus on the nurturing function.

The Matter of Social Activism

It is difficult for whites to understand why Black students are not involved to any great degree in women's liberation, registration and the draft, gay rights, ecology issues, consumerism, the energy crisis, and other social issues which seem so important to them. There are at least two reasons for this apparent apathy.

First, the basic problem of racism has not been solved. For instance, Black women know that the women's liberation movement is essentially geared to alleviate the problems of white, middle-class women, and those problems are far removed from the problems Black women feel they have to face. Seen through the eyes of many Black women I have talked to, women's liberation is defined almost exclusively by white women and is rooted in their boredom with white, middleclass values. Black women, on the other hand, are more concerned with the basic issues of survival and vertical mobility. As one Black woman at Howard University told me, "White women want to be like men. They want to play

football and basketball with men. They want to ride horses and drive racing cars. They want to be presidents of corporations and politicians. The problem is that when they get these things, they become just like white men—they become oppressors. And they turn into man-haters. What difference has it made in the lives of Black women to have white women in the governor's mansion or as president of a corporation? Black women, on the other hand, want their husbands to be able to find meaningful and well-paying jobs. They want to find jobs themselves which will allow them to pay for day care and the kids' school lunches, and for tuition, and for that nice home in a middle-class neighborhood that white women seem to want to reject."

In a word, it is a matter of priorities. For Blacks, the priority is *How do I survive in a racist society?* If white people took that problem seriously, it would be easy for Blacks to relate to all the other social issues. But why stop dealing with racism in the dormitory in order to deal with racism in the anti-draft movement.

Second, Bob Mayo, UME staff in New York, has helped me see that the fundamental question Brother Jacobs raises when he states that "the social dimension of the Gospel is missing" is this: How can a social witness grow out of personal piety? Bob suggests that the reason Black Christian students, and whites for that matter, tend to focus on personal piety is that "White ministers have forgotten, if they ever knew, how to express the social imperative of the Gospel in language that relates to them." In all candor, the same charge could be leveled at many Black ministers as well. But to a large degree, when Black Christian students become social activists, it is the Black minister and the Black church that motivates them. Very seldom do Black students get involved as a result of white ministry, because the white minister usually is not able to articulate the social Gospel in a way that makes it come alive to Blacks. As Bob says, "It is difficult for Black Christian students to see and hear the social imperative in the Gospel. They know what it is to be shut out, rejected, and oppressed. They lean on the Gospel for staying power." But they have not internalized that Gospel imperative so that it becomes the theological rationale, the motivation for social activism.

I would make one final comment regarding the *missing* social dimension of the Gospel that Brother Jacobs speaks of, and that is this: Very often, while campus ministers are so preoccupied with the style of Black worship, testimonial meetings, gospel music, and Bible study, they are unaware that these students may be, and often are, socially involved. Three casual comments in his article help to point this out.

First, he states that a Black minister from Akron agreed to teach on "The Black Church—An Authentic Christian Religion." I am sure the students had something to do with this. And I am also sure that unless the minister who teaches the course is completely out of touch, he will have to discuss the role of the Black church and Black Christians in the liberation struggle of Black people, thereby dealing with that social dimension of the

Gospel. And I am sure that Black students will be motivated by the course.

Second, Rev. John Perkins, a Black evangelical Christian who has been deeply involved in social action, was on the campus. The Black students co-sponsored his visit. Anybody who knows anything about Brother Perkins knows that he will attempt to motivate students to become social activists. The fact that the students had Brother Perkins on campus, and the resulting impact of his visit says something positive about those students' social awareness.

Finally, Brother Jacobs refers to the recognition of the student group by the Black United Students and the fact that the recognition was probably due to the efforts of the BUS president who "is a dedicated Christian." He further states that this president could not join in the activities of the fellowship group because he was leading a protest march in objection to racism on the football team during Parents' Weekend. This is involvement, it seems to me! And because of this BUS student's activities, I wonder if Brother Jacobs can see potential for social activism in the linkage between BUS and the Black Christian fellowship group at Kent State. I wonder how many white campus ministers write off Black Christian students' social concerns, because they do not use their meeting to discuss those concerns, but rather as sessions in which they gain reinforcement and the *staying power* that Bob May talks about, for the battles they engage in on a daily basis.

The Differences in Roles of Black and White Campus Ministers

Throughout this article I have alluded to the differences in roles of Black and white campus ministers. Let me try to summarize them here.

First, white campus ministers frequently cannot provide the kind of worship leadership that is meaningful to Black students. The role of the white campus minister, then, is one of enabler of worship. That is, he or she should make it possible for Black worship to take place by doing as Brother Jacobs and Dick Bowyer have done, *i.e.*, bringing Black ministers to the campus for this purpose.

Second, given the frequent inability to articulate the social imperative of the Gospel in a way that relates to Black students, the white campus minister's role is, again as Brother Jacobs has helped to do, to bring Black resource people to the campus who can articulate that imperative.

Finally, the general role of the white campus minister in relation to Blacks is a supportive one; the role of advocate/broker is of primary importance.

Black campus ministers on predominantly white campuses, on the other hand, frequently define their roles in terms of Christian nurture and development. It is not limited to the personal piety dimension, but rather focuses on the needs of Black students for support, encouragement, and reinforcement as they struggle to survive in an environment which is often

hostile to them. Therefore, the role of the Black campus minister is that of pastor, priest, and friend. He or she also functions as prophet, not so much by design but rather as a result of working in institutions which because of racism, isolation, and exploitation force him or her into a prophetic role much the same way in which the Montgomery situation forced Martin Luther King into that role and the Prince Edward County Virginia School Board's closing of all public schools rather than desegregating in 1959 surfaced the late Rev. L. Francis Griffin as a prophet, priest, and pastor.

Brother Jacobs has done a marvelous job. It sounds as though his experience has helped to free him up a bit. I hope that eventually he will be able to pray extemporaneously the next time the basketball team loses and the players and cheerleaders call on him. But maybe that is expecting too much. I am quite satisfied that he made the effort, found that there are benefits and rewards from being involved, and felt inclined to honestly share his experiences with us. My prayer is that some young white minister who is just getting started in campus ministry will take the initiative to get involved and will not wait twenty-three years to do so.

Developing A Healthy Self-Image

Chaplain (MAJ) Andrew B. Seidel

One of the most significant achievements of modern psychological research has been the understanding of the critical role played by a person's self-image. This understanding has been extremely helpful in explaining the motivation behind much of human behavior and aiding counselors to guide others into healthy patterns of thinking and acting. For this reason, a knowledge of the meaning and influence of the self-image will be an invaluable help to the pastor or chaplain involved in personal counseling.

An Unfortunate Misunderstanding

The large volume of material dealing with self-image in recent psychological literature was readily picked up by religious counselors and writers. It quickly became fashionable to find biblical support for the psychological statements about a person's self-image. Unfortunately, in their rush to embrace the discoveries of psychology and harmonize them with the Bible (or vice versa in too many cases), religious writers erroneously equated a good self-image with self-love. Primary support for self-image teaching was found in scripture passages such as "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 19:19; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9). It was argued that if a person did not love himself, he could not love his neighbor.

Given the biblical antagonism against selfishness in all its forms, it is not surprising that christian psychologists and theologians began to react to the unfortunate equation of a good self-image with self-love. Paul C. Vitz in his book *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, writes:

It should be obvious—though it has apparently not been so to many—that the relentless and single minded search for the glorification of the self is at cross purposes with the Christian injunction to *lose* the self. Certainly Jesus Christ neither lived nor advocated a life that would qualify by today's standards as 'self-actualized.' For the Christian the self is the problem, not the potential paradise.¹

¹Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 91.



Chaplain Seidel, pastor of Grace Bible Church, College Station, Texas, is presently the chaplain of the 420th Engineer Brigade, USAR, Bryan, Texas. After graduating from the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, he served on active duty for nine years in the Corps of Engineers. Having left active duty in 1972 to attend seminary, he was awarded a degree in theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas in 1976.

Theologians have noted the same misunderstanding in the use of passages such as Matthew 19:19 or Luke 10:27 to teach that a good self-image is the same as self-love. John Piper writes:

The modern misunderstanding of this commandment, most prevalent in the cult of the self, is the remarkably common notion that Jesus is not presupposing but commanding self-love and that self-love is equivalent to self-esteem, positive self-regard, and the like.²

John Stott deals with the same problem and shows convincingly that the biblical passages that command “love your neighbor as yourself” are not teaching on the subject of self-image at all. He states:

...theologically speaking, ‘self-love,’ that is, directing one’s concerns and service toward oneself, is the biblical concept not of virtue but of sin.³

A Better Understanding

There are other biblical passages which may more properly be used to teach on the subject of self-image from a biblical perspective. One of the best is Romans 12:3 which reads:

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

(NASB)

In this passage the apostle Paul contrasts two different patterns of thought. Both patterns deal with a person’s self-concept. The improper self-concept is described as “thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think.” The Greek term *hyperphroneo* means to be “haughty” or conceited; literally it means to be “high minded.” This self-exaltation is clearly contrary to biblical teaching.⁴

At the opposite end of the spectrum would be a pattern of thinking about oneself which could be described by the Greek term *kataphroneo* which means to “look down on, despise, scorn, treat with contempt.”⁵ While this term is not actually used in the Romans 12:3 passage, it would be the equally undesirable opposite of thinking too highly of oneself. It would represent self-depreciation as the opposite of self-exaltation. Unfortunately, in christian churches and ministries the idea is all too often suggested that christian humility, a virtue commanded in scripture, is expressed by self-depreciation. If it is true that a great majority of Americans suffer at least mild inferiority, the suggestion that the Bible requires self-depreciating attitudes and actions will add a tremendous burden of guilt to most people who are conscientious about their religion.

²John Piper, “Is Self-Love Biblical?” *Christianity Today*, (August 12, 1977), p. 9.

³John R.W. Stott, “Must I Really Love Myself?” *Christianity Today*, (May 5, 1978), p. 34.

⁴William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 850.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 421.

What the Bible actually commands in Romans 12:3 is neither of these unhealthy extremes, self-exaltation or self-depreciation. The apostle says that we are to “think so as to have sound judgment” about ourselves. The term *sophroneo* means “to be of sound mind, be reasonable, sensible, serious, or to be in one’s right mind.”⁶ God evidently desires us to have a healthy, realistic view of ourselves. It is not without meaning that the word *sophroneo* is related to the word *sozo* which means “to save.” A realistic, balanced view of oneself is a “saving” view in that it allows a person to live a satisfying, meaningful life. Such a realistic view of oneself might accurately be called self-appreciation or self-acceptance.

It is self-acceptance, not self-exaltation or self-depreciation (nor indeed self-love) that is commanded in scripture. Self-acceptance is taught in scripture because an adequate self-concept is necessary to function successfully in life. Any pastor or chaplain who has been involved in counseling has noted that those who struggle with strong feelings of inferiority have a difficult time living a satisfying life. The same may be said for those who are conceited. Both have a very difficult time relating to other people. Speaking of the need for an adequate self-concept, Lawrence J. Crabb has said, “...people must accept themselves as adequate in a truly significant role if they are to honestly regard themselves as worthwhile and so to enjoy the fulfillment of being a real person, he must be able to help him develop a realistic, accurate, and adequate self-image.”⁷

What Is Our Self-Image?

A person’s self-image is his own mental concept or “picture” of himself. It is that collection of thoughts and attitudes which describes how he sees himself and what he believes to be true about himself. The self-image is a collage of images, feelings, and value judgments pertaining to oneself. While the collage will contain many different images, it will have a dominant orientation which will be either positive or negative. A person with a positive self-concept will feel good about himself because he judges himself to be acceptable or adequate. A person with a negative self-concept will generally feel bad about himself because he has judged himself to be inadequate or worthless. The feeling associated with the basic orientation of the person’s self-image permeates his whole being and affects all of his relationships with other people.

How Is Our Self-Concept Formed?

There are three major sources of a person’s self image. Heredity is one factor that contributes to a person’s self-image. A person’s basic personal-

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 809.

⁷Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 61.

ity type will help mold his self-concept. Some people are naturally more outgoing and active. Others are by nature more quiet and shy. Some people struggle with self-acceptance while others seem to have little struggle at all. Some children are naturally more sensitive while others seem to be able to handle everything with little emotional turmoil.

A person's self-concept is also the product of his own evaluation of his experiences. All of us react to our experiences by making value judgments about them. When we succeed in accomplishing something we desired to do, we feel good about ourselves. When we do not succeed, we place a negative value judgment on ourselves for failing and feel bad about ourselves. If we usually accomplish what we desire, we tend to have a positive self-image. A number of failures to meet our own goals would tend to produce a negative self-image. It is, however, extremely difficult to talk about value judgments as being strictly individual because our goals and values are so heavily influenced by other people.

By far the most significant source of our self-image comes from what other people think about us as evidenced by their responses to us. More precisely, it comes from what we think they think about us. While heredity is a factor, a person's self-image is primarily a result of interaction with other people. "The sense of selfhood or personhood is not instinctual. It is a social achievement, learned from living with others."⁸ A person's self-image is formed quite early in his life. By the time a child is five or six years old his basic self-image is established.⁹ Because of this, a child's self-image comes primarily from interaction with his parents. Children cannot "see" themselves, so they form mental images and judgments about themselves by seeing themselves reflected in their parents' responses to them. Dorothy Briggs describes this in terms of parental "mirrors."¹⁰ The way parents treat their child tells him whether he is a significant person or not. Parents seem strong and infallible to a child in his pre-school years. Therefore, the child tends to accept as true what the parent says about him through responses to him. A loving, accepting parent who cares about the child will communicate self-worth to the child. The parent that views the child as a nuisance or burden will communicate a low sense of self-worth to the child. A busy parent may truly love his child, but, if he does not show that love, the child will not feel loved or accepted. It is the child's feeling of love that is crucial.

Of course, what no child can realize is that his parents have insecurities and problems of their own. These problems affect the parents' relation-

⁸Dorothy Corkille Briggs, *Your Child's Self-Esteem* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), p. 9.

⁹Paul D. Meier, M.D., *Christian Child Rearing and Personality Development* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 3. Meier states that "approximately 85% of a person's ultimate personality is formed by the time he is six years old."

¹⁰Briggs, *Self-Esteem*, pp. 9ff.

ship with their children. It is unfortunately true that many parents raise their children on the basis of their own needs rather than the child's needs. When this happens the self-image of the child suffers. Often parents seek to have their own need for significance fulfilled by the performance of their children. This puts a huge burden on their children. For example, the basic pattern of relationship in the early life of an adult alcoholic is of parental expectations that were too high to meet. The child constantly fails to measure up to his parents' unreasonable expectations, so he concludes that he is worthless. Lacking a sense of personal worth and adequacy, he later turns to alcohol or drugs to ease the emotional pain of an inadequate self-concept.

As a child grows up, the self-concept that he derived from interaction with his parents is refined by his interaction with other people. If others respond positively to us we feel positive about ourselves; we have a sense of adequacy and worth. If, on the other hand, people respond unfavorably, our self-concept suffers as a result. This is what gives peer pressure such tremendous power over teenagers in particular. During teen years there is great personal insecurity fostered by the physical and emotional transitions that are taking place. The young person is also beginning to relate more to his peers than to his parents, and his fragile self-image is now at the mercy of his peers for affirmation or rejection. Since all teenagers are going through a similar period of insecurity, they find it very easy to be critical of others in order to build themselves up at the others' expense.

Even later in life a person's self-image is significantly affected by others' responses to him. His relationships with his spouse, professional associates, and church and social acquaintances are very important. Particularly in a highly competitive professions such as the military, academic or large corporations, evaluations of one's performance by others greatly influences one's sense of self-worth. A low efficiency report or missed promotion can be devastating to the self-image.

Society Greatly Influences Self-Concept

In many ways the society itself strongly influences a person's self-image. As society becomes more complex and depersonalized, people experience a diminished sense of personal contribution and worth. Assembly line workers who have repetitive jobs with little sense of personal accomplishment find their self-worth challenged. University students in a large, impersonal university feel a lack of personal significance. Changes in society sometimes deprive people of roles which gave them a feeling of fulfillment and personal worth. While there has been much good resulting from the women's liberation movement, the movement's backlash against the wife-mother role has deprived many women of a sense of significance in their roles as wives and mothers.

The society itself is often guilty of giving major significance to the wrong values. James Dobson has effectively summarized the wrong values

adopted by contemporary American society. Physical attractiveness is a major source of human worth. After describing the powerful influences of physical attractiveness on children, Dobson states: "Most of the major choices made by adults are influenced one way or another by the attribute of beauty."¹¹ Those who are physically attractive are given much positive affirmation. Those who do not measure up to society's standards of attractiveness struggle with self-acceptance.

Intelligence is another quality highly valued by our society. Parental expectations of their child's academic performance put tremendous pressure on many children. The almighty "grade point average" rules the lives of multitudes of college students to whom an "A" represents worth and significance, and a "C" represents failure and inferiority. Other values such as money, success, and social status have a similarly strong influence on self-concept. For most people it does not matter whether these values are right or wrong. What does matter is that the majority of people hold these values. One therefore can feel worthy and significant only if he conforms to these values.

Why Is It So Difficult To Change One's Self-Image?

Because one's basic self-image is set at such an early age when we have very little control over our own lives, our major task is to refine or change our self-images. While the self-image can be changed, it is never a very easy process. Most personal changes involve some personal insecurity, and a change in one's self-image is no exception. A person with a poor self-image will often hold on to that self-image, as painful as it may be, because the thought of changing to something as yet unknown is even more painful. Our self-image involves our own personal identity; to change that identity is a process fraught with insecurity. Often a person will prefer to retain a known inadequate self-image because he has developed defense mechanisms to cope with the inadequacy he feels. He has no such confidence that he can cope with a different self-concept.

The self-image also resists change because it strongly affects a person's perception of reality. We see ourselves in relation to others and to the world about us in terms of our self-concept. Because of this, our established self-concept acts as a grid to screen information that comes to us. If the new input is in harmony with the self-concept, it is allowed to pass through the grid. Those inputs that are contrary to the existing self-image tend to be rejected. All of us have a need to be internally consistent; we must make sense to ourselves.¹² If a person believes that he is basically unattractive, he will reject responses from other people that indicate that

¹¹James Dobson, *Hide or Seek* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974), p. 29.

¹²The theory of "cognitive dissonance" is discussed in L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

they find him attractive. Such a positive response does not agree with his negative judgment regarding his attractiveness. Since he cannot believe himself to be both attractive and unattractive at the same time, he must reject one or the other evaluation. Since his existing self-image is so powerful, he will usually reject the positive response to maintain his internal consistency. People with poor self-concepts have a difficult time accepting praise as genuine. They tend to discredit the source by thinking that the other person is insincere or deluded.¹³

Since the self-image affects our perception so strongly, it tends to be self-fulfilling. A person may believe himself to be a failure. He then rejects praise when he does do a good job. Thinking himself to be a failure and refusing any contrary information, he begins to expect to fail and to be rejected. Before long he begins to fail, and he experiences actual rejection. Since the rejection is more in harmony with his self-image, he accepts the judgment as a failure and repeats the cycle. It takes a major jolt to break the cycle.

Three Ways To Develop A Healthy Self-Image

Although changing one's self-image is difficult, it can be done. An understanding of how a person's self-image is created and how it operates will help in designing a strategy to change it to be more healthy. The following suggestions are three general ways that the self-image can be effectively changed. A pastoral counselor should adapt them to specific situations encountered in the person he is trying to help.

First: Honestly Evaluate Yourself

Because of the selective perception practiced by the self-image, an honest evaluation of oneself may be difficult. A counselor cannot simply tell the counselee that he is worthy or successful or nice looking. The counselee must come to recognize these things himself. A discussion of family background can be quite helpful. The purpose of this discussion is not to shift the responsibility onto parents but to help the person see where some of his self-concept ideas came from. Some of the parental responses and evaluations of the person as a child may have been incorrect. When they were incorporated into the child's self-concept, they had a detrimental effect. When the person is more mature, he may be helped to understand that some of these parental evaluations came from the parents' own insecurities, problems, and stresses. They therefore do not represent accurate evaluations and can safely be rejected.

In evaluating oneself it is helpful to make a list of both strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes people with poor self-images will have a difficult

¹³Bobby R. Patton and Kim Griffin, "Guidelines for Improving Interpersonal Communication," *Interpersonal Communication* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 445.

time listing any strengths and will need some suggestions from the counselor. It is particularly important that weaknesses are not magnified beyond their true significance. When there are weaknesses or faults that can be corrected, the appropriate actions should be taken. While some weaknesses cannot be changed, there are many that can be changed at least partially. Excess weight can generally be lost, more flattering styles of dress may be adopted, new skills can be learned through community education classes, conversational range can be broadened by periodically reading news magazines, and almost everyone can participate in some form of physical exercise. The weaknesses that cannot be changed are best acknowledged for what they are without excess significance being allowed to transform them into fatal flaws. Most people seem to want to work and worry about correcting their weaknesses. A much better solution is to concentrate upon the development of strengths. James Dobson calls this "compensation" and says: "compensation is your child's best weapon against inferiority."¹⁴ Compensation works for adults also.

The Christian counselor has an advantage at this point. The Bible indicates that all christians have been given spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift is a God given ability for service. The Christian counselor can help his counselee to determine his spiritual gift by providing opportunities for meaningful service in the church, chapel, or related ministries. The exercise of a person's spiritual gift will provide much personal satisfaction as well as a sense of personal contribution and significance. Because all spiritual gifts are necessary for the proper functioning of the church, the exercise of any spiritual gift is a significant contribution to the kingdom of God. For this reason it is not surprising that immediately after Paul's statement about having a realistic, balanced self-image (Romans 12:3 mentioned above), he discusses the different functions of individual christians and the unique contributions of each of the spiritual gifts.

Second: Adopt True Values

Part of our culture's detrimental effect on our self-concepts comes through the pressure from false values. Physical attractiveness, intellect, social status, and financial success are some of the false values that create tremendous pressures on our feelings of self-worth. Society too often places its values on those external characteristics which can never provide true satisfaction. There will always be someone more attractive, more intelligent, or more successful. The answer to the pressure of false values is to adopt true values.

Here again the christian counselor who is committed to a biblically based value system has a powerful tool to aid a counselee to develop an adequate self-concept. The values presented in the Bible give clear evidence of the worth of each person. Each human being is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27); each person is greatly loved by God with an uncondi-

¹⁴Dobson, *Hide or Seek*, p. 74.

tional love (Romans 5:8). Each christian is accepted by God (Ephesians 1:6), specially gifted for significant Christian service (I Corinthians 12:7), and made adequate for that service¹⁵ (II Corinthians 3:6). Furthermore, we are assured that although human evaluations emphasize the outward appearance, God is primarily concerned with the development of character (I Samuel 16:7). Through homework assignments¹⁶ and personal discussions with the counselor a person may be helped to develop a new system of values that is both true and more conducive to the development of a more adequate self-concept.

Third: Develop Meaningful Personal Relationships

Because a person's self-image is constructed primarily from interpersonal relationships (particularly with his parents), his self-image may be modified through the same process. The importance of developing significant personal relationships can hardly be over-emphasized. These relationships are technically termed "facilitating relationships" because they facilitate "positive self-re-evaluation or increased self-esteem."¹⁷ Every person needs at least one interpersonal relationship in which he can be totally open and honest, in which he can reveal his true self. In such a relationship he can then receive true and direct responses to his self-revelation. This feedback will greatly facilitate an accurate picture of himself and can help dismantle some of the wrong ideas previously built into his self-concept.

Such relationships are not easy to develop. Most interpersonal relationships are designed to protect one's self-concept. Because they fear rejection, people try to project images of themselves that they believe will be acceptable to the other person. But, even if these projected images are accepted, there is no real satisfaction gained because the person knows that it was only a projected image, rather than his true person, that was accepted. The fear of rejection makes the development of a truly honest relationship a major accomplishment.

If an interpersonal relationship is going to develop into a facilitating relationship it will need to have certain characteristics. It will of necessity be a relationship in which unconditional love and acceptance are expressed. The individuals must sense that they are accepted as they are and will not be rejected as a result of something they might reveal about themselves. Only then can they feel secure enough to carefully, bit by bit, reveal their real selves. The relationship must be one of mutual trust in which neither person would deliberately hurt the other in order to satisfy his own ego needs.¹⁸ As they relate to each other honestly, each can give the other direct feedback through honest responses. This feedback, in the

¹⁵Crabb, *Basic Principles*, p. 61.

¹⁶Helpful discussions of the use of the Bible in counseling and subjects related homework assignments may be found in Waylon O. Ward, *The Bible in Counseling* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977).

¹⁷Patton and Griffin, *Interpersonal Communication*, p. 134.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 140.

context of a secure relationship, provides the means for an accurate re-evaluation and change of one's self-concept. Some parts of the person's previous self-concept will be changed or discarded, others will be reinforced or re-valued. The desired end result is a more accurate, balanced, and healthy self-concept.

A counselor will want to help his counselee to develop facilitating relationships. There are two primary places where a Christian counselor should be able to help a person develop such a relationship: the family and the church or Christian community. In counseling those with self-image problems it will often be crucial to also provide marriage counseling. The couple should be helped to learn to communicate love and acceptance verbally and to give honest responses to each other. Of all human relationships, that between husband and wife should be the kind of facilitating relationship that will help both partners to grow to their fullest potential. Indeed, the biblical injunctions for a husband to love and care for his wife and for her to respect her husband seem designed to produce just such a result (Ephesians 5:21-33).¹⁹

The Christian community itself should also be the source of facilitating relationships. In the passage in Romans 12 where he deals with self-concept, Paul gives several instructions that deal with the quality of interpersonal relationships in the church. Honest communication is called for by "let love be without hypocrisy" (verse 9); a climate of love and acceptance by "be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor" verse 10; and a depth of personal involvement by "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (verse 15). Clearly the Christian community should be a source of mutually supportive interpersonal relationships.

To help develop such relationships, a church or chapel community can provide training in interpersonal relationships and sponsor small groups designed to encourage personal growth through interpersonal relationships. These small groups (variously called share groups, fellowship groups, or growth groups) can provide a secure atmosphere for a person to be honest about himself and receive accurate and helpful feedback about himself. It is helpful to have someone leading the group who is skilled in interpersonal communication. However, the most crucial ingredient is that the group develop a caring and accepting atmosphere. In such an atmosphere even the most timid person will be encouraged to take the first steps of authentic self-disclosure. As the other group members respond in understanding and supportive ways, the person's self-concept will gradually be modified in a more healthy direction.

Problems with self-image are often some of the most difficult personal problems to bring to a solution. Although it strongly resists

¹⁹There are several helpful resources to develop communication skills. Two that have been found useful are: *Communication: Key to Your Marriage*, H. Norman Wright, Regal Books, 1974, and *The Trauma of Transparency*, J. Grant Howard, Multnomah Press, 1979.

change, an unhealthy self-concept can be changed. Honest personal evaluation, the adoption of true personal values, and the development of facilitating relationships are the most helpful methods to bring about a needed change. A Christian counselor with a caring christian community in which to work has the best possible opportunity to guide hurting people to a more realistic and healthy view of themselves.

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Theology of Ministry: A Dialogical Story

Chaplain (CPT) Allen P. Chase

Please tell me something about the world.

O.K. God made the plants and animals and told people to take care of them. All the people had to do was talk to the plants and animals. God said that if we people stopped talking to them, thorns would grow up out of the ground and some of the animals would start eating other animals. It worked out well for awhile, but then some people said; “the heck with these plants and animals! We’re going to get into technology.” And they stopped talking to plants and animals. And sure enough, thorns sprang up and animals started eating each other. Now, the thorns had to be picked continually in order for the land to be of any use. Those who had achieved the most technological power made others do the hard work of thorn picking. Some people saw the bleeding hands and the sweating brows and said “We’re not going to do that!” And they didn’t. They waited until the thorn pickers had finished a field, and then occupied the field by force. There’s more to this story, and I’ll share it with you later if you like, but that’s how the world got to be a place of technological power, warfare, and thorn picking.

Uh-huh. Well, I can get into that. But I’m interested in ministry. I’d like some concrete advice. To whom am I called to minister?

A minister friend of mine grew up in a suburban community, went to college and seminary, and became a pastor of a suburban community much like the one he came from. It took him less than a year to realize that there was no ministry for him to do. People in his community had their two-car garages, their comfortable homes, their color TVs—they weren’t searching for anything. They were smug in their affluence. While seeking the Lord in prayer he absent-mindedly wandered into the slum section of a city. Here he saw brutality, starvation, pain, and despair in all shapes and sizes. He resigned from his suburban church, established an inner-city ministry, and has engaged in busy and fulfilling ministry ever since.

Oh yeah? Bet he’s on the mission field someplace, huh?

No. He’s working in that suburban church my first friend left.



Chaplain “Phil” Chase, an American Baptist clergyman, is presently assigned to Fort Dix, NJ. He is a graduate of Houghton College and Gordon Divinity School, and is presently enrolled in a D.Min. program at Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia.

Wow. But how does a person such as myself get direction for my own ministry?

Could I get back to my thorn picking story?

Oh, all right.

Well, God, of course, saw the thorns, the animals eating each other, the technological power bases, the warfare, and the bleeding hands. And God did an unlikely thing—he became a person, and not just a person but the lowest form of person. God became a thorn picker. He said he came to help, to heal, and to give us hope. And naturally we followed the same form of logic as we did at first, and we killed him. We whipped him with the very thorns he picked, and then we twirled them into a mock crown, and stuck it on his head. We killed him.

Come on.

Well, you see, he interfered with technology. Some of the thorn pickers had hopes of being technocrats. And the war-mongers were confused as to who they were fighting. He was interfering, and people got confused, and it just seemed logical to kill him. Things did seem clearer without him.

That's sad. It's pathetic. But what's it got to do with my question about ministry?

Later on, God said that in coming as a thorn picker he'd been ministering as well as teaching us how to minister.

I'm not sure I understand. But it sounds like God wants us to do all the dirty work. I mean, it's nice that he came and all, but....

Oh, it's still God's blood that we bleed. He still picks the thorns. He's always opening something beautiful up underneath those thorns as we pull them up. He washes us up, and binds our wounds, and helps us to work together. All kinds of fields are opening up!

What does "ordination" have to do with ministry?

Do you remember that crown of thorns we put on God's head?

Yes

Ordination means that we get to have a crown of thorns on our heads.

Ouch! I'm getting uncomfortable with all these thorns. I'd like to know what it means to be a pastor, but let's please quit talking about thorns.

I don't have to talk about thorns. How about the king who wore no clothes?

Oh, I know that one.

Well, in this story, he never really got to be king. He was just an ordinary man who wanted to be a king. He thought that if he wore kingly garb he

might one day actually be a king. He wore the most outlandish costumes! And one day his neighbors got tired of it. They dressed up a couple of their kids like elves. The kids went to this would-be king, convinced him that they were elves, and convinced him that they had very special clothes which the finest person in the world could not see, but which all others could see. He fell for it, paraded around like a fool, and was completely humiliated when he saw those kids laughing at him. After that he wore the same clothes everyone else did. The rest of the people were quite pleased at this and after watching him for awhile realized that he had learned a valuable lesson from the whole experience. And they made him their pastor.

Oh, come on! Well, tell me, then, what does it mean to be a “lay-person?”

A “lay-person” is one who has never been caught with his or her clothes off.

Good grief! I think I want to go back to the thorns. Tell me what a church is.

A church is one thorn picker helping another thorn picker when the thorn picking gets thorny. And there God is in the midst of them!

Forget the thorns! Forget the thorns! Could you please tell me in a simple, understandable way how a Christian can be expected to minister in and to a society which is evil, vindictive, selfish, and unthinking?

You’re walking away from God if you’re walking away from thorns. But your questions seem to be heading towards God. Maybe if I tell you about a thorny person you’ll find that helpful.

O.K. But I hope you’ll answer my question. I’d like to see the church functioning in society.

I knew once of a boy raised in a very angry, violent home. He believed that he was no good because he was reprimanded and abused so often. He also believed that the world was no good because there was no happiness—only violence, pain, deceit, and tears. As he grew up he had no friends; no one liked him. He was, in fact, virtually unlikeable. He left home as soon as he could because he hated his family, but by now he had come close to losing his sanity and was in no way prepared to cope with life’s demands. God had mercy on this boy, and placed him within reach of several Christians who loved with God’s love. And they loved him. He reacted to their love with a bitter, cynical anger. He was sure that they were going to use him, or trick him, or humiliate him in some fashion. He would teach them what the world was about. But they loved him—week after week, and month after month—they loved him, perhaps the most unloveable of all. And after a long time, he began to love them too. He didn’t trust them at first; his changing began with a desire to let their love inside. But then he did trust them. And soon he began to love them in return, although he didn’t yet know how to let it show. The next step for him was to love the God these Christians knew and loved. He became transformed inside; he became a

part of the Church. And soon, in very small ways, with faltering steps at first, he began to show his love. He seems now to have a gift for loving people who seem unloveable. And he does it.

Now, I can understand that very clearly. I guess that I'll have to be aware of my actions toward unloveable people.

It's all right to keep loving the loveable ones too.

Oh, good. That is easier. But I have another question. When I think of the Church, I usually think of a worship service. What does a worship service have to do with what you're talking about?

I do admit that sometimes it's hard to tell. But worship should be the push that makes a snowball snowball. My son excitedly dashed out at the first heavy snowfall, and he determined that he would make a large snowball. His start was good, but he soon got distracted by other boys who were more interested in having a snowball fight. He left his snowball which had been growing so well, and soon the sun melted it. He returned after the snowball fight to find nothing left, and he was disappointed. Now if the temperature had been colder his snowball would have remained without having been larger than it was. In this world of ours, there always seems to be plenty of heat. God has to keep rolling us, or we'll melt; we must take advantage of opportunities for God to do that.

Please—I'll admit that I had trouble with the thorns. But now you're interpreting the story for me. I'm not so far gone that I can't use my own imagination.

Sorry. Perhaps I had begun to underestimate you.

That's all right. Now, there really should be just one snowball, shouldn't there?

Yes, that's right.

Well, tell me, then—how will Christians ever become one as the Lord Jesus prayed that they would be? You know, so that the world will see that as a testimony.

The answer to your question is contained right within the prayer to which you refer. There was once a group of Christian people who got together to seek that answer to your question. They were very learned people and represented a variety of traditions, denominational perspectives, and areas of scholarly expertise. There was cordiality, hope, and good-will in the air. They approached their task with industry and fervor. At first, matters proceeded well. But then of course the process faltered. People disagreed first on what it meant to be a "bishop," and some said that they didn't want bishops no matter what the word meant. There was an especially vehement argument as to whether the word "tradition" should be spelled with a capital "T" or a small one. No one seemed satisfied with anyone else's view

of the authority of clergy. At one point after the squabbling there seemed to be some movement towards regrouping, but it turned out that the next item up for consideration was the Eucharist.

Down the tubes, huh?

The absolute pits! There was nothing left to be salvaged. With more than just a few sighs and tears these truly dedicated people decided to adjourn and to give up seeking their cherished goal. But they had two or three more days at their hotel and they decided to stay and unwind. One brave soul suggested that they meet for prayer and bible study. All agreed that this was an excellent idea. They prayed together and shared the Word together. Soon the time at the hotel was up, but no one wanted to leave. In the short time at the end, they had come to love each other and to depend upon each other through their times of prayer and sharing. They were one in Christ.

For goodness sake! It sounds as if the best thing for the denominations to do would be to simply disband and let the Holy Spirit take care of unity.

That would be a very difficult thing for any denomination to do.

It would take a lot of faith.

Let's just say that evil as well as good confuses us.

How does a minister or a Christian go about fighting evil?

It really is a fight! You were in the Army, weren't you?

Yes.

Then you remember those old Sheridans, the best of which had a maximum traveling distance of one hundred yards.

Well, it wasn't always quite that bad, but I know what you mean.

You'll recall the rather complicated electrical system the Sheridans had; if one part of the system broke down, the whole vehicle was immobilized. Well, one of these Sheridans I knew of somehow contacted a familiar spirit.

A What?

A familiar spirit. Some said it was the ghost of a soldier who had died operating that track. Others said it was simply a spirit looking for a home who decided that he or she had something novel in a Sheridan. At any rate, the thing would travel from one electrical system to another so that the Sheridan never could move out of its small spot in the tank park.

How do you know that the Sheridan wasn't malfunctioning?

The systems always checked out perfectly. But the main thing was that this was a mischievous spirit. Live rounds would float through the air. Coke cans would spin around and around inside and just above the Sheridan.

The spirit would even switch service caps from one crew member to another.

That must have raised a few eyebrows!

Oh, it did. And of course it didn't take long before the crew members were scared half to death. In fact, they refused to enter that Sheridan. The troop commander gave the crew commander a direct order to get in that Sheridan or else! The crew commander tried to explain what was going on. His was the misfortune of having a troop commander who didn't believe that sort of thing. The troop commander became red in the face and promised to do all sorts of atrocious things to the entire crew if they would not immediately dispatch themselves into that Sheridan. Fortunately for all concerned, at this point the Squadron Chaplain was making his rounds through the tank park. He made an inquiry of the troop commander as to what could possibly occasion such ire and ill-will. The troop commander did not feel like discussing the issue and simply pointed in the direction of the hapless Sheridan crew. The crew fairly overwhelmed the poor chaplain with their babblings of what was going on in their track. After a short time, however, he got the idea. He then asked the troop commander if he might briefly try to be of some help. The troop commander replied that it could probably do no harm, but to please hurry as he was a very busy commander. The chaplain then made his way inside the haunted Sheridan.

Oh, my goodness! Did he perform an exorcism?

Well, he didn't call it that. After he got inside the track, he prayed for the familiar spirit.

He what?

He prayed for the spirit. He shared with God that he was presently with a poor wandering spirit which obviously could not find a proper home. He asked that God would bless this spirit with love and guidance, and that God would help this poor spirit to find wholeness in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, what happened?

The Sheridan crew reported that everything became normal. They never had any problems such as they had had again.

Now, that's a good, practical, if unusual, experience. But it seems to me as though much of the time we ministers have trouble putting theory into practice.

We do tend to be imprisoned by words and concepts. The words can sound so powerful, but many times something's wrong.

Exactly. What can be done?

I have a friend who shortly after graduating from seminary came under the

conviction that the Christian faith should be earmarked by happiness. He noticed that members of his congregation tended to be rather glum as they gathered for Sunday worship. He determined that he would evoke a new atmosphere within his flock. He preached a sermon on being happy. He was very prophetic about it. He pounded the pulpit; he ordered the people to smile. When that didn't have the desired effect, he even went so far as to threaten the flock with divine judgment if they did not manifest this particular fruit of the Spirit he was after. Even that didn't work.

My goodness, what a stubborn flock he had. He had done about all one could do, hadn't he?

That's what he thought. He became despondent; in fact, he felt like he had hit the bottom of the barrel. In his studies he read something about "grace." "Aha," he said, "this is something I need right now." He fell back and rested on this Lord he had been trying to serve. It felt good. He felt relieved. And more than that, he felt love—love for God, and love for that stubborn flock. It didn't matter quite so much that they were stubborn. He loved them and he was happy with them. And do you know what happened?

I can take a guess. I'll bet you that they started smiling too!

That they did. And you just finished the story.

Oh—of course. But can't psychologists and social workers smile also. At least in the first instance our man was in the pulpit. That's unique.

O.K. I'll buy that. He was in the pulpit, and he smiled. That's very important.

Oh, come on!

All right. There's more. Once a poor family had a dog. Three men in succession visited the family, and each patted the dog. The first was a salesman. He was a perceptive man and could tell that this family could not really afford what he was selling. He could, however, see that this family loved their dog. He sought to sell himself as a warm, loving human being; moreover, he was certain that he could impress this family if he would pat their dog. And so he patted the dog. We can't know for sure, but the dog might have sensed hypocrisy here and may not have liked the salesman. The second man to visit the family was a social worker. He was interested in making this family a producing societal unit. He patted the dog also, for two reasons. First, he also wished to demonstrate sincerity and good intentions, but his primary reason for patting the dog was that the dog was in a playful mood. The social worker thought that if he patted the dog things would quiet down and he could get on with his business. In this instance the dog felt his personhood diminished and his presence devalued. The third man to visit the family was a local pastor. He was a true man of God. He cared for the family and wanted to help. As did the salesman, he

noticed that the family loved their dog. This, he believed, spoke well of this family. And as he looked at the friendly, playful dog, he could not help but think to himself what a wonderful job God had done in creating this dog. With a smile, the pastor reached over and patted the dog. The dog felt good about this person. But the family did not notice any difference whatsoever in how the three men patted their dog. In fact, they were quite pleased that three people patted their beloved dog.

Uh-huh. Of course today there is not only the issue of pastoral identity. Today we're grappling with sexual identity, racial identity, etc., and we're trying to find and define ministry within a variety of contexts. How do our categories impact on church and ministry?

Let's reduce it to the smallest unit. We might see more clearly what our options are in approaching these things. I know of two couples who both got married just after completing college. The first couple sought to be very aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. The husband was threatened when his wife got some additional education. He hurriedly got some application forms together and went out and got just a bit more education than she had. She found another way of outdoing her husband. Their marriage was preoccupied with oneupmanship. They were in competition. They were threatened by each other's differences; each used their differences as ways in which to reject the other.

Seems silly.

Yes, but it is one way to approach it. The other couple also sought to be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. They also sought additional education and new areas of interest. They also had their differences. But their concept was much different. They saw themselves as being on the same team instead of being competitors. If one got more education, the other saw him or herself as being all the more enriched. The differences were seen as an enhancement and broadening of who they were as a team. They prized their differences and they learned from their differences. And they loved much easier.

That second one makes a lot of sense.

Ministry could involve convincing the "Church" of that.

Or perhaps showing that to the Church.

Thank you.

And now, I suppose the last and most basic question of all would be about how one is to be saved?

Exactly so! I like the way you think! Salvation is the last question, and not really the first after all. And yet it is the most basic of all. There is no other name under heaven by which we people might be saved than the first and only greater minister. And ministry is part and parcel of working out our own salvation—it's working out our own commitment to and affirmation

of the Christ. It's expressed by weeding thorns, by helping our fellow thorn pickers, and by praying for wandering spirits. The moment in isolation may seem mundane, but the story in all its parts is beautiful and exciting; the drama yet unfolds. Salvation is at hand!

Amen!

See you around.

Identifying the Enemy: A Chaplain's Struggle With Cancer

Chaplain (MAJ) Dennis E. Schimek

A few minutes before noon on Wednesday, 12 September 1979, three doctors from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota came to my room at Methodist Hospital in that city and handed down their verdict. The chief spoke with a bit of a Scottish accent: "You have a colon malignancy. If it is all right with you, we will schedule surgery for Friday." Anyone who has ever heard those or similar words spoken to them will never forget the time, day, or place. I most certainly will not.

Cancer was not a total stranger to me. It had attacked several times in my mother's family, but hasn't yet claimed all its victims. I knew this dreaded disease was no respecter of persons young or old, men or women, civilian or military, parishioners or even priests. Now, I assumed, it had caught up with me. I wasn't frightened or even angry so much as just relieved. For the last three weeks I had been sick enough that surgery offered hope of a welcome deliverance.

The Adjustment

The possibility of my situation turning out to be terminal was not an overwhelming concern. My parents had never protected me or my brothers and sisters from death. They taught us to respect death. It was from them that we learned that going to wakes in the community was one of the social amenities you just didn't omit. We had all been able to talk about death freely. The nuns in school taught us to pray for a happy death. And I had decided long ago that I did not want to just drop dead or not wake up some morning.

Still I wondered about myself and my attitude. Did I really believe what the doctors told me? They said it definitely was cancer, the disease that scares people "more than any single danger in the world, including violent crimes and atomic war."¹

Many questions were drifting through my mind. I was glad that the Bishop who ordained me had been so insistent that we priests have a will.

¹Robert Chernin Cantor, *And A Time To Live* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 9.



Chaplain Schimek is a Roman Catholic priest of the Diocese of Winona, Minnesota, currently serving as pastor of St. Luke's Church, Sherburn, and of St. Joseph's Church, Trimont, Minnesota. He is the DIVARTY Chaplain for the 47th Infantry Division, Anoka, Minnesota, Minnesota Army National Guard.

Even though I am only 42, I was glad to have updated it a couple of years ago when I changed my mind about where I wanted to be buried.

For the first time in my life I was beginning to think seriously about my own death. Where was my copy of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's book, *On Death and Dying*, was one of the thoughts that crossed my mind. I wasn't even dead and already I was writing my obituary! Throughout the events of the surgery and recovery period I found myself making mental notes of the various stages one passes through.² The account of that journey, made in the company of my family, my parishioners, and my doctors, is the theme of the few pages that follow.

Enough time has elapsed since that September 12th for me to see in perspective my denial stage. Two short hospitalizations had preceded my going to the Mayo Clinic. At that point it seemed to be only a severe flu that attacked me. That was what I was able to tell myself and my family. My local doctor seems to have encouraged my denial. He told me he suspected ulcerative colitis and recommended more tests. He added that X-rays revealed some kind of "lump that shouldn't be there." As I think back, it seems he was preparing me to accept whatever the final diagnosis would be. "If you've got something they can cut out, prefer it to colitis," he told me as he and a consulting surgeon encouraged me to go to one of the large medical centers.

Any anger at this point was primarily disappointment over this interruption in my life. It was September, when many parish programs were ready to start. My only consolation was that maybe we could get to the source of my health problems.

My doctor gave me the name of a specialist at the University of Minnesota Hospital. Though he preferred my going there, he honored my request to go to Rochester's famed Mayo Clinic. This was the first bargain I struck with whatever disease it was that I had. At least I could go for help where I wanted.

All the extra tests and preliminaries before surgery came at what was for me an *up* time. The end wasn't yet in sight, but I felt we were moving in the right direction. The doctors were carefully informing me of their own concerns about my condition. They said the cancer may very well have spread to the liver. So they had the "ostomy nurse" come in and prepare me, should I wake up with a colostomy. I had heard that a colostomy could mean the end of one's Army career. But I managed to handle the thought of having to resign from the chaplaincy I so loved. I was working on a particular long correspondence subcourse when I got sick. And I welcomed the lesson on how to live with a colostomy as a legitimate distraction.

I kept a stiff upper lip until a couple of days after surgery. The

²Reference is made to the five stages of dying (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) identified by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in chapters III through VII of her book *On Death and Dying* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969)

surgeons backed away from any kind of straight answer each time I asked if they had “gotten it all.” Why couldn’t they tell me, I thought. I wondered if they were as scared as I was of what the answer might be. This was the only time I cried. Finally one of the surgeons told me there was a 50-50 chance I was cured. For that one statement he could have gotten me to pay him any dollar amount. It sounded so good! But a few days later it dawned on me that there was also a 50-50 change I wasn’t cured! Still I wished those doctors could be fair with me.

It was 10:30 a.m. on the fourth day after surgery that I first accepted my fate. My roommate was being released, to go home to face what seemed to me a dreary future. His cancer had spread to the lungs. Drastic measures would have to wait until it got worse. I was amazed to hear myself say as he went out the door: “I’ll pray for you because *we* have to stick together.”—I had found my first ally. Though I couldn’t yet taste victory, the struggle no longer seemed so one-sided, in favor of the doctors. Finally I know some peace of mind. Admitting to be a cancer victim is quite different from just saying that a foreign object, the tumor, had taken up residence in my large colon.

It has always surprised me that I never asked to see any X-rays that showed the tumor.³ Nor did any of the doctors offer to show them to me. I never referred to it as *my* tumor; it was too much of an adversary. I may have gotten off on the wrong foot with the X-ray technician who discovered the tumor. He was one of those individuals who speaks outloud to himself (and to anybody else within earshot!) whatever is going through his mind. The examination (barium enema) had just gotten underway, it seemed, when he came out with something like: “Oh, my, I’m not going to continue this examination. He can’t take any more of this. No wonder he’s having problems...” He never bothered to explain any of this to me. In fact, I never saw him again. I wondered if they’d given up on me already. And I hadn’t thought I *overheard* something not meant for me.—I made my peace with that man a few days later when the Mayo Clinic accepted his X-rays and didn’t require me to go through that test again. Also, he may well have been the first to teach me to hate the tumor.

With a base of operations established, I could not build a new future. The head of the Medical Oncology Department from the Clinic paid me a visit. He invited me to be part of an experimental program that involved taking a new drug, an immune stimulant called Levamisol. The doctor was a real salesman. I almost felt proud to be a cancer victim. A week before, doctors told me not to try to find the reason why I got cancer—not age, not heredity, not diet, not the area I lived in. It really hurt not to know and to be told I may never know. But now, to be part of the Mayo Clinic’s research efforts was a real lift. If I couldn’t be part of the

³Stewart Alsop agrees. He wished he’d never asked to see the slides of his bone marrow, expecting the vision of those malignant cells to haunt him for a long time. See Alsop’s *Stay of Execution* (New York: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1973). p. 144

problem maybe I could be part of the solution!

Being a member of the clergy myself, I wondered how my own faith would get integrated into this whole experience. Oh, yes, before I ever arrived in Rochester a priest friend (my confessor and spiritual director) visited me in the hospital. It was a comfort to receive from him the Sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion, a kind of thrill to be on the receiving end of the Church's ministry to the sick. I felt I belonged to something bigger than I was. And suddenly it occurred to me that maybe the *lump* wasn't as big as I was imagining. A unique sense of belonging came over me as members of my two parishes stopped by to tell me they prayed for me by name at Sunday Mass. In Rochester this same feeling continued as Franciscan Sisters I'd known told me my name had been added to the Motherhouse prayer list.

During the hospitalization the Divine Office became for me a daily wellspring. Maybe it was because I was removed from the daily rush of parish life and had more time to read the Office more prayerfully. Maybe it was because my energy-level was so low at this time. But now the psalms I'd always loved spoke volumes and provided ready-made sentences for all the thoughts and feelings struggling to be expressed. "If I climb the heavens, you are there. If I lie in the grave, you are there. If I take the wings of the dawn and dwell at the sea's further end (or even at Methodist Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota!), even there your hand would lead me, your right hand would hold me fast." (Psalm 129:8-10) It occurred to me that if there aren't any atheists in foxholes, neither can there be very many in hospital beds.⁴

The doctors had assured me that I would be released from the hospital about ten days after surgery. I progressed according to schedule, quickly learning the cadence of the medical machine. For the first couple of days visitors found me somewhere in the midst of a collection of drainage apparatus, oxygen tubes, and intravenous lines. After a few days of that kind of life I was glad I was not able to get the private room I had requested. A roommate—any roommate—makes better company than a machine.

The Struggle

I grew up accepting the truism: there's a certain amount of guff a person must simply learn to take. And the saying proved true in the hospital. Lab technicians (especially if they had just come to work) let me know I didn't have many *good* veins. I began to suspect the hassle of hospitalization was provoking by design. Maybe all the medical people had to do was get the

⁴It was at the time of ordination to the order of Subdeacon in the third year of theology that we accepted the celibate life and the obligation of daily praying the Divine Office for the rest of our lives. The Office Book was often referred to, with mild irreverence, as one's wife, one's companion till death. What a helpmate it was during those days.

patient to the point where he is strong enough to take responsibility once again for his health. I had been on a liquid diet for several days before surgery. The last meal before surgery was a *low residue* meal that was anything but liquid: a delicious hamburger minus some of *the works*. It seemed so out of place. I told the doctor I had expected to find at least one olive on my plate. The next afternoon when they wheeled my up to the operating table, I had to get myself from cart to table without assistance. (Was Calvary at all like this?) I would have preferred to have slept through the entire operating room experience. The only way I could effectively deal with what I saw and heard was to try to laugh about it. On a return visit to the Clinic someone commented how efficient the place was. One even compared it to the Army. I watched and, sure enough, that day we got our chest X-rays by the numbers.

At other times the institution could be so human. On the second-last day in Methodist Hospital the doctors wanted me to drink as much fluid as possible. Just before supper a nurse asked if there was some fluid I'd like. I asked for a scotch and water. She came back with it in record time. I'd expected to be turned down, but I was wrong—doubly wrong, since I'd always thought Methodists were teetotalers.

Early in the course of my personal introduction to cancer I found that one of the effective tools to recovery was to develop a fighting stance. I learned to appreciate any help to boost me over the momentary cases of the blues. A former parishioner wrote: "I licked it (breast cancer) sixteen years ago. So can you!" The encouraging word that put it all together for me came from a grand old man of the cloth, a retired brother-priest of eighty-plus years, who has never lost his way with words. Part of his letter follows...

Dear Dennis,

I hear the Lord has taken you by the hand and led you out into the desert where you have the opportunity to probe his secrets and his ways with men. No doubt you thought when he picked you to be his priest that you had found all that you needed to know. But there was something special he wished to disclose and thought now to be the time for it. I know you have been a good priest and have a ready ear for what he has to say. And I know your heart is open and your hands too and that the way of the Lord is the only road you are willing to walk. We will all accompany you on the road wherever it may lead. We will hold up your hands and pray and call on the name of the Lord to bless the journey...

Somehow, receiving that letter made the whole experience worth it.

The Recovery

Initially there was a certain glamor in going to the Mayo Clinic. What a thrill to be admitted past the threshold of that awesome place where medical miracles happen. I found myself wanting to move in for keeps. One learns a lot about life at the Clinic. It is like a school one should *graduate from* and move on. On regular return visits I've been encouraged

to “just give us a call if any problems develop.” But so far only one doctor made sure I left with his office phone number. And only one has bothered to ask me specifically for mine.

It hurt when the Mayo Clinic began weaning me away from itself. I continued to feel like a freshman as the weeks of recuperation began. It would have been so much easier, I thought, to have the doctors give me a few restrictions. They only suggested taking a couple of months off, to do no heavy lifting, and to get back to the full life I was used to.

My strength seemed to return in large chunks. The euphoria of feeling good and looking good should be sipped. I gulped it. I found out it was possible to get oneself drunk on the good health that quickly came back. Little did I know that recovery was not just a matter of an incision healing and the return of color to one's cheeks.

I found out that I didn't have the slightest idea what *part-time* meant. In my hurry to get back to *full-time* I stumbled and fumbled more times than I care to admit. At the same time I was seeking ways to slow down. I wondered when life would be back to the smooth flow I thought I remembered. What they say was turning out to be true; the process of healing is not the smooth progression many people assume, but rather “more a lightning bolt, full of ups and downs, progressions and regressions, dramatic leaps and depressing backslides.”⁵

People kept warning me that I was rushing it. I resented the knowing looks of registered nurses in my parish and others who wanted to “mother” me. Finally I had to sit down and really go over the life I had been living. I knew I wasn't perfect, but I refused to admit that I was in bad shape. Now I had to re-learn the rhythms of my life and of the lives of those I worked and lived with.

I had walked out of my office on 9 September, leaving it in such a state that I would never have to come back. My successor would be able to find everything when he arrived. Now it was 25 September and I was walking back into that office. It was just like I had left it, but I could tell that much in my life waited to be done. It was then that I decided to abandon the report of my death and set to work on the report of my life.

In Retrospect

My experience with cancer has taught me several valuable lessons. First, I can do without putting the medical profession on a pedestal. Having owned up to a good many of my weaknesses, I can tolerate the doctor or nurse who needs a shoulder to cry on and can admit it. I had many questions about the advanced state of the tumor. But for reasons I'll never know, the surgeons put off telling me it was a “number two” (on a scale of 1 to 5) until just before the anesthesia was administered. I met that doctor,

⁵Melba Colgrove, Harold H. Bloomfield, Peter McWilliams, *How To Survive the Loss of A Love* (Allen Park, Michigan: Lion Press, 1976), p. 42.

who gave me this information, on a six-month checkup. We visited a bit after the “procto” examination. He said he remembered me. I’ve wondered since what it was about me that he recognized, the inside or the outside. Only one doctor in all this time impressed me as not being in a hurry and would talk about any topic I wished. He was a kind of person in whose presence you thought of all those questions you always wanted to ask a doctor. One young doctor visited me the night before surgery and told me he would pray for me! Near the end of my hospital stay a nurse brought a bottle of pills I was to take home. She tried to remove the child-proof cap, and, after a brief struggle, got the cap off, commenting; “It’s also nurse-proof.” That little remark served to remind me that I was going to be able to get well in the company of doctors and nurse who weren’t afraid to wear their struggles on their sleeves.

While still hospitalized I said more than once that getting cancer was like learning how to walk. It did slow me down, to an absolute walk. I was a patient, a sufferer. (The word “patient” comes from the Latin root *pator*, to suffer. So does its sister-word, patience.) Now I began to realize all that I had yet to suffer, even with my co-workers, parishioners, and friends. There were those who were afraid to mention the word “cancer” in conversation for fear they would upset me. But by this time cancer had ceased being an affliction. It was now one of my life’s stages. My cross had gone from gibbet to a thing of glory. I can think and say all this, even though Kubler-Ross says that for many cancer is “still a terminal illness, in spite of increasing numbers of real cures, as well as meaningful remissions.”⁶

Knowing that one is not alone makes traveling life’s road much easier, and sometimes more exciting. Cancer victims seem to find each other. Shortly after returning to my parishes, cancer struck a household two doors from me. The wife’s mother was to have surgery similar to mine. Over the months that followed we became good friends, comparing notes about the struggle we had in common. The couple was so grateful for my interest in them and was surprised to hear how much their mother’s recovery meant to me. This feeling of solidarity with other cancer victims has uncovered whole new nuances of meaning in John Donne’s *No Man Is An Island*. Any man’s death, especially from cancer, does diminish me. And ministry to dying cancer victims touches a raw nerve for me, a lot like “an itch you can’t reach.”

The experience I’ve had gave me a front row center seat at the first dress rehearsal of my own death. Most of my fears have been uncovered and can be dealt with. A big realization is that one always dies (and lives!) in the milieu of loved ones who still struggle with their own fears. Death for me is no “big deal.” It’s not meant to be something that will happen to you, but something you *do*! Like Saint Francis of Assisi, death is no longer a

⁶Kubler-Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

stranger, but a sister! The words of the Mass for Christian Burial do fit: "Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended."

When I found out that cancer was probably not going to take my life at this time I had to begin living again. But there was this difference. I had to live the rest of my life in a forty-two year old body. I had sailed through my thirtieth and fortieth birthdays without any of the trauma popularly associated with those times. Now I found how delinquent were the payments of respect I owed my body. I felt a certain estrangement or embarrassment over all the fuss that was suddenly being showered on my mortal frame. (Lots of dental work has had to be re-done in the past year. Pure coincidence that it was, it has not been easy to get comfortable with spending more money on my body in the last year than in my entire lifetime!)

The temptation is there to rest on one's laurels and lick one's wounds. But it's unfair to oneself not to take the step into the tomorrows life affords you. That is what has happened to me. A future was given to me, almost a feeling of being re-born. Certainly I have a new lease on life. I step perhaps a bit more delicately now, and I think I am traveling lighter into my new future. Life is fun again, an adventure. My days are too valuable to be used up reporting my death when the report of my life waits to be written.

I am going to try now to live until I die. That sounds trite and a bit worn, I know. But it's what I must do. When I went each month for blood tests, there was a mild anxiety I felt, wondering what the tests would show. But I have made up my mind to live from checkup to checkup. I have been given a chance to travel an interesting route. I don't know if one would call it "the valley of the shadow of death," but I have had the chance to back up from a dead end street into an open highway. I don't mean to sound reckless, but I have spit in death's eye!

Conclusion

Only the reader can judge the value my odyssey might have. Surely there are more of my kind in the annals of medical literature. As chaplains we need to continue to learn more about and improve our ministry to the dying cancer victim and also to the one who goes through a dying process but survives. This disease is too cruel to always kill on the first strike. Some think it more cruel to let its victims survive, only to be pursued in future days by the Grim Reaper. Often the Grim Reaper, the survivor, and the counselor will be walking the same side of the street. One cannot be too prepared when we find ourselves in the same places. It always pays to find out who our enemy is: the disease, the doctor, the victim, or ourselves?

I am the one who will benefit most from writing about this experience. I'll always be grateful to the thoughtful chaplain friend who first encouraged me to share my story. I close with a few verses a brother-priest sent me shortly after I came back home to my parishes. It has nourished many of my hungers.

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves—do not seek answers that cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. Take whatever comes with great trust, and if only it comes out of your own will, out of some need of your innermost being, take it upon yourself and hate nothing.

—Rainer Maria Rilke

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The Law of Contrast: Reducing Parental Stress

LTC James R. David, MSC, ACSW and
Robert R. Farra, M.S.S.W.

Parenting is stressful today. The rise of democratic values¹ finds many parents bewildered by the attitudes and behaviors displayed by children who have come to expect coequal, rather than second class status. Economic pressures accompanying the current double-digit inflation find many parents frustrated and readily prone to acts of indifference and/or violence toward their children.² Other social variables, almost too numerous to mention, such as the rise in single parenting,³ absence of adequate child day care facilities, and a seeming overemphasis upon individualism,⁴ combine to exert formidable pressure upon the majority of contemporary American parents.

Chaplains are often in the forefront of parent efforts to develop nurturing, fulfilling relationships with their children. Chaplains are respected for possessing a balanced perspective in regard to changeless, religious values and contemporary interpretation and implementation of those values.⁵

Purpose

This paper addresses just one of the myriad variables impacting upon parents today. The threefold purpose of this paper is to (1) provide some information that will be effective in reducing parental stress by (2) explaining the "Law of Contrast"⁶ or what has been termed "Sibling Deidentification."

¹R. Dreikurs and V. Soltz, *Children: The Challenge* (New York: Hawthorn Book, Inc., 1964).

²S.K. Steinmetz, *The Cycle of Violence* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977).

³V. Ross and M.K. Sawhill, *Time of Transition* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976).

⁴F.I. Nye, "Overemphasis on Individualism?" *Family Perspectives*, 12(3) (Summer 1978).

⁵Earl H. Gaulke, *You Can Have a Family Where Everybody Wins: Christian Perspectives on Parent Effectiveness Training* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1975).

⁶D. Kelly, Class Lecture Notes. *Behavior Dynamics in the Classroom*, April 15, 1980. The Florida State University.



LTC David is currently a doctoral student in Family Relations at Florida State University. He is a clinical social worker, certified sex therapist (AASECT) and a clinical member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT).

Robert Farra is a Ph.D. candidate in Family Relations at Florida State University and a licensed clinical social workers in Alabama.

tion”⁷ and then (3) outlining some concrete steps that may be taken to constructively modulate the inevitable behavior contrasts among siblings.

Law of Contrast

The law of contrast begins with the startling premise that each child, prenatally and gradually after birth, makes an “early decision”⁸ regarding which behaviors in her/his environment are most likely to maximize parental acceptance. This “early decision” premise is termed “startling” because it is suspected that most nonprofessionals would scoff at the notion that a tiny child has the wherewithall to decide which of his/her behaviors will be well or ill received by the people in his/her life. It is somewhat easier to believe if this phenomenon is described as a trial and error process, i.e. the child discovers what works and does not work in getting strokes or reinforcement.

This dynamic of actively and semi-cognitively (perhaps intuitively) ascertaining what will be an effective style of coping or “making it” in the world, may be seen as an ongoing, lifelong occurrence. Satir’s⁹ discrete communication styles, e.g. placator, blamer, computer, distracter, and leveler are examples of fixedly subscribing to a mode of relating that may or may not be constructive. Bardill¹⁰ has emphasized the healthiness of being able to readily move from one life stance (similar to Satir’s communication styles) to another, based upon the context. For example, it may be appropriate to placate a friend occasionally and to blame, compute, or distract, depending upon the situation.

The second component of the Law of Contrast is that siblings will develop in contrast to one another.¹¹ The amount of contrast in personality characteristics is influenced by the variables of age proximity, sex, and birth order. For example, the further apart in age, the less will be the contrast between the siblings; conversely, the closer in age, the greater will be the contrast. Regarding sex, siblings of the same sex will tend toward greater contrast than different sex siblings having the same age proximity. In terms of birth order, contrast tends to be highest in the first sibling pair, lowest in jump pairs, and intermediate in second pairs. **Table one** contains a hypothetical listing of contrasting personality characteristics possessed by three siblings, each eighteen months apart in age.

⁷F. Schachter, E. Shore, St. Feldman-Rotman, R. Marquis, and S. Campbell, “Sibling Deidentification,” *Developmental Psychology*, 12(5) (1976), 418-427.

⁸R. Goulding, “New Directions in Transactional Analysis,” in *Progress in Group and Family Therapy*, ed. by C.J. Sager and H.S. Kaplan (New York: Brunner/mazel, 1972).

⁹V. Satir, *Peoplemaking* (Palo Alto, Calif: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972).

¹⁰D.R. Bardill, “Relational thinking and Person Abuse,” *Social Work*, (Spring 1977).

¹¹W. Toman, *Family Constellation* (New York: Springer Press, 1961).

OLDEST SISTER	MIDDLE BROTHER	YOUNGEST BROTHER
Responsible	Irresponsible	Somewhat Responsible
Excellent student	Disinterested Student	Complacent Student
Compliant	Aggressive	Assertive
Feminine	Masculine	Androgynous
Not Competitive	Competitive	Easy Going
Adventuresome	Athletic	Homebody
Semi-Extrovert	Extrovert	Introvert
Sensitive to Others	Not as Communicative With Parents	Will Talk When Invited
Conscientious	Sloppy	Wants Parental Approval
Gets Bored Easily	Does Not Entertain Self	Entertains Self
Reflective	Impulsive	Thinks Deeply

Table 1. Sibling Contrast in Regard to Personality Characteristics

Discussion

At this point, a perceptive reader may ask, “What’s so unsettling about each child being different? Do we want a world of clones?! We need different people to fill different tasks and roles in our society!” The two-fold answer to this legitimate issue is contained in the aspects of extremism and parental guilt.

First of all, in terms of parental guilt, we suspect that many parents blame themselves inappropriately when one child, for example, is a Phi Beta Kappa and the next is a high school dropout. It is important for parents to be aware of the inevitability of sibling contrasts or “sibling deidentification.” And that extreme contrasts may be avoided or reduced by evaluating family values and the emotional tone present in the family. The greater the degree of cooperation, as opposed to competition, found in the family unit, the less the need for contrasting behaviors to elicit parental attention. As is now well known among behavioral scientists, even negative attention or “strokes” from parents is better than no attention.¹²

In terms of the second point concerning extremism, it seems important to avoid or reduce extremes of sibling contrast which result in fixed bipolar positions such as overachiever-underachiever, law abiding-delinquent, et cetera. When such polarizations begin at an early age, they may easily become self-fulfilling prophecies. Also, using a multi-systems perspective, the family member who adopts a dysfunctional life stance may be viewed as the symptom bearer or scapegoat for a troubled family system. The function of the scapegoat is to keep the family intact or homeostatic by bearing the blame for unresolved intrapsychic or interpersonal conflict existing within or between other family members.¹³

¹²C. Steiner, *Life Scripts* (New York: Bantam Press, 1974).

¹³N.W. Bell and E.F. Vogel, *The Family* (New York: The Free Press, 1960).

Reducing Parental Stress

For some parents, simply learning about the Law of Contrast will be sufficient to reduce guilt feelings and to modify those parental behaviors that may be instrumental in keeping alive excessive sibling contrasts. An example is the process wherein an attribution unknowingly becomes a prescription for an inappropriate behavior.¹⁴ A parent may remark to a friend, within the hearing of a daughter or son, "I am constantly telling Johnny or Susie to pick up his/her clothes, but HE/SHE IS SO SLOPPY!" The attribution of being sloppy becomes a prescription, almost a parental mandate for being ill kempt.

For other parents, simply learning about the Law of Contrast will not be sufficient motivation to identify and change those family rules that keep a high level of competitiveness alive in the family. These parents may be influenced to change as a result of stressful contact of the whole family or one family member with extrafamilial forces, such as work or relocation stress. The stress may highlight the need to examine and adjust family rules. The same reaction may occur during the various transitional points in the family. A common precipitating event is the onset of adolescence. (Relatedly, the need for sibling deidentification tends to lessen as siblings grow older and become more secure in their identities.) Still other parents may become determined to change a competitive family atmosphere as a consequence of reading a magazine article or a book, attending an educational workshop, or entering some form of psychotherapy.

Regardless of the source of the initial push to reduce competition in the family, a pivotal area that invariably requires altering if other changes are to be successful, is the marital relationship. Without a satisfactory marital relationship, it is doubtful that other strategies to reduce parental stress occasioned by extreme sibling competition will be effective on a continuing basis.

Specific strategies of proven effectiveness in reducing sibling deidentification through the engendering of a more cooperative atmosphere are (1) quality time/special time, (2) family nights/family meetings, (3) encouragement, and (4) problem solving skills. Quality time or special time entails the scheduling of specific time each week for each parent to meet on a one-to-one basis with an individual child. Family nights involve shared time together in enjoyable, non-competitive activities such as arts and crafts, a family outing, etc. Family meetings may be a part of a family evening; are conducted in an equalitarian manner; and have the express purpose of addressing and resolving conflict areas before they become fixed and overly oppressive. Encouragement and problem solving skills may be used in the context of quality/special time and family nights/meetings or they may be used at other times. Encouragement and problem solving are communication skills tantamount to the "I" messages and "No

¹⁴R.D. Laing, *The Politics of the Family* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

Lose Method" taught in Thomas Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.)¹⁵

Conclusion

Parenting is particularly stressful today due to economic pressures and shifting social values. The Law of Contrast has been discussed as a possible vehicle to be used by chaplains in facilitating the reduction of parental stress. Several methods of promoting a cooperative family atmosphere, such as quality time/special time, family nights/ meetings, encouragement, and problem solving skills, were discussed.

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The Family and Its Home in the 1980s

Edward Cornish

Many books and articles that discuss the family begin with a statement that seems so simple and natural that it generally gets little attention until we pause to think about it. Then we realize that the statement is packed with a portentous message for the future of our civilization. The statement—expressed in different words by different writers—is this: “The family is the basic unit of society.”

The Family is the Basic Unit of Society

The family is where we all begin our lives—where we first experience ourselves and the great world around us—where we learn how to speak, how to feel, how to play, how to work, how to learn, how to love, how to laugh, how to cry.

The family is not only the basic unit of our society, it is our future-creating institution. It is the family that takes us as wild, weak animals and converts us, little by little, into civilized human beings.

Today there is growing concern that the family—the basic element of civilization—is in trouble. Advancing technology appears to have set in motion a variety of trends, which have interacted in various ways so as to undermine the family as an institution and since the family is the basis of our civilization, its destruction could mean the destruction of our society.

Despite the threat they may pose for the family, technological advances are likely to increase rather than decrease in the years immediately ahead. For example, biomedical science is beginning to make it possible to choose the sex of one's children; will this lead to an overproduction of males—or females—or perhaps to violent demographic swings—an oversupply of males being followed by an oversupply of females? What would this mean for the family?

Scientists soon may be able to control the aging process, giving human beings an indefinite lifespan; if marriage contracts continue to remain valid “until death do us part,” many of us will have to face the question of whether we really want to live with the same person for, say 500 years!

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Mr. Cornish is President of the World Future Society (4916 St. Elmo Ave., Washington, D.C. 20014) and Editor of its magazine, *The Futurist*. The organization, founded in 1966, is composed of individuals interested in forecasts of forthcoming social and technological developments. The Society has more than 50,000 members throughout the world, among whom are many outstanding scholars and world leaders. The above article is an address which Mr. Cornish delivered before the Better Housing League, Cincinnati, OH, on 30 October 1980.

Scenarios for the Future

Granted the dramatic changes ahead in all aspects of civilization, any prediction for the future of the family seems almost foolhardy. But we can construct the scenarios to suggest a few possible futures for the family.

A scenario provides a useful starting point for thinking seriously about the future, because it forces us out of the present by creating a plausible sequence of future events. A scenario is a kind of imaginary history of things that haven't happened, but might happen. In a sense, a scenario is a fantasy, but a fantasy that frees our thinking so we can deal with the future more realistically. A scenario shows us that we have real choices concerning what may happen in the future, and that these choices are important. By giving us glimpses of possible futures, scenarios help us to make wiser decisions concerning the future we want to achieve. So let's look now at six different scenarios suggesting how the family might develop in the years ahead.

Scenario I: A Continuation of Present Trends

The first scenario anticipates that current trends will continue: The divorce rate will continue to rise until divorce is the "normal" way for marriage to end. The marriage and remarriage rates continue to decline, as they have in the past decade or so, leaving more and more people in the "never-married" and "divorced and not-remarried" classes. Increasingly the traditional family—husband, wife and children—disappears. Instead we see people living by themselves or in groups of individuals unrelated by kinship or marriage. Women increasingly pursue careers and shun the role of homemakers; men perform needed household chores for themselves. Neither sex has any particular need for the other. The individual rather than the family is increasingly viewed as the "natural" unit of society; because family groupings are only brief arrangements rarely lasting more than a few years.

The birthrate drops further, reaching the point where the people of the United States and other advanced nations are no longer reproducing themselves and are being replaced by surplus population from the developing countries. As a result, the culture of the advanced countries begins to shift in the direction of the cultures of the immigrants from the developing world. For instance, the language of the United States might gradually change from English to Spanish.

Most people live alone. They do their own thing, unhindered by family obligations. There is a fantastic expansion of self-realization activities aimed at helping the individual to maximize his personal happiness and do his own thing. People lavish money on material objects and pleasures and travel constantly in search of excitement. Many will buy a second home and some a third, fourth, or even a fifth.

So there you have one future for the family—simply a projection of what's happening, an extension of today's trends into the years ahead.

Now let's go to a second scenario which might be called "a return to the status quo."

Scenario II: A Return to the Status Quo

The continuation of current trends seems to lead eventually to absurdities. If divorces continue to increase at the rate of recent years, there will soon be more divorces than marriages.

The fact that current trends cannot persist indefinitely suggests they must eventually come to a halt and even reverse direction. In fact, one can easily argue that most social trends are basically cyclical in character. The view is summed up by the French expression, "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*" (The more it changes, the more it is the same thing.) This second scenario envisions future life-styles that are not very different from the life-styles of today: The marriage rate moves up and down and so does the divorce rate. Economic recessions and wars push life-styles one way or the other for a few years, but eventually the trend reverses and patterns move back to where they were before.

People who favor this scenario can point to the cycles in customs through history: Like long skirts or short skirts, full beard or shaven face, many elements of life-styles change for a time but often come back to what they were before. If you don't like the current trend, just wait a little and soon it will reverse, because people are always, essentially, the same—always have been and always will be. So our second scenario suggests that the divorce rate, which is now very high by historical standards, will probably decline and the family will continue in the future not too different from what it is today. Now let's go to a third scenario—the actual abolition of the family.

Scenario III: The Abolition of the Family

If the family seems to create a lot of problems for society, it may actually be abolished. So we can image the government making it illegal for people to marry or bear children, and imposing stiff jail sentences on any one found guilty of matrimony. Such measures might be adopted also as a means of controlling population growth; China today actually has very strict measures designed to restrict marriage among young people.

Other ways may be found to provide the functions that the family once offered. For example, government agencies might collect sperm and ova from suitable donors, combine them in test-tubes, and then allow the fertilized ova to gestate under careful supervision in artificial wombs that nourish and protect the baby until it is ready to eat and breathe air on its own. While the baby is developing into a child and later an adolescent and adult, he is cared for by professionals rather than parents. The child has no family at all. Instead he is trained to think of all mankind as his family.

The abolition of the family could be accompanied by the elimina-

tion of sex—that is, interpersonal sex. New technology could make it possible for people to have far better orgasms through drugs or electrical stimulation of the brain. Technology also might enable people to reproduce through cloning so it will no longer be necessary for people to produce sex cells. Biologists can then start to develop people without any sexual organs at all. Long ago, James Thurber wrote a book entitled *Is Sex Necessary?* A future civilization may prove that it is not. The creation of neuter people may lead to a far more peaceful and efficient civilization. The industriousness and unselfishness of social insects like the ant is proverbial, and most of it may arise from the fact that workers in an ant nest or beehive are neuter and therefore not distracted by sex.

A sexless, family-less society might develop a truly noble civilization, far more sublime than what we know today. Now let's go to a fourth scenario.

Scenario IV: A Reversal

Our fourth scenario begins with the thought that current trends represent a radical departure from normal human behavior and they must eventually reverse: The family is therefore likely to return to what it was like in the past.

Reversals are hardly unknown through history. Think of the Counter-Reformation or the current resurgence of Islamic traditions in the Mideast. It is certainly conceivable that society in the future might take deliberate steps to restore the traditional family—the family of the 19th-century America, for example.

How could this be done? For one thing, society could put more emphasis on the “sacredness” of marriage. Religion might be revitalized and called upon to help devise more impressive ceremonies to insure that couples understand what they are undertaking.

A second step might be the revival of community life, because of the importance of the community to the family. To strengthen communities, automobiles might be banned or heavily taxed so as to encourage people to patronize local stores and institutions.

A third step might be the reform of television programming. Programs that show divorce in a favorable light might be outlawed along with TV commercials. Television commercials are, I suspect, one of the deadliest enemies of marriage and the family. In the world of television commercials, the problems of love and family living are easily solved by the swift application of the sponsor's product, but in real life, difficult and painful choices must be made between alternative goals that have both strongly desired and strongly undesired features. In our intimate relationships, we must constantly balance the claims of self against the claims of others, the realities of the present and the possibilities of the future, the longings of the heart and the cautions of the head. Television provides us with a fantasy world which leads us to attitudes that tend to destroy marriages.

A fourth step might be a reaffirmation of sex roles. The blurring of

sex roles might encourage parents and teachers to train boys and more carefully to perform the tasks expected of husbands and girls to perform the duties of wives. Sex-segregated institutions and groups might be encouraged as a means of protecting and strengthening marriage and the family.

A fifth step might be the renewal of sanctions against out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Recognition of the importance of the intact family in the emotional development of children could lead to a reversal of today's condoning sympathetic attitude toward unmarried women who bear children out of wedlock. Strong actions to prevent the birth of illegitimate children might include mandatory pregnancy tests and abortions, and sterilization for repeated offenses.

A sixth step might be the discouragement of sex outside marriage. Government actions might range from televised "spot announcements" on the desirability of virginity to stiff jail sentences for fornicators.

Scenario V: A Revitalization of the Family

A fifth scenario envisions a revitalization of the family. Instead of simply turning back the clock—restoring the family to what it once was—society might seek a new and better family, based on a clear recognition of changes in society as well as an appreciation of what the family has offered in the past and can still offer in the future. A rationale for revitalizing the family rather than seeing it decline or disappear might go as follows:

The traditional family, based on ties of blood and marriage, is the "natural" basis of society and any departure from the natural way is risky. Not even the wisest social scientists know all the vital functions that the family fulfills in the operations of society and in the psychic life of the individual. Experience demonstrates the strong ties that can develop between a mother and the child she has carried within her body and who has suckled her breast. Similarly potent is the "pleasure bond" that develops between a man and a woman. These natural ties, part of man's biological nature, are the root of most social life. All societies everywhere and at all times that we know anything about have developed on the basis of these natural ties. Technology has given us a high standard of living but has inadvertently caused problems for the family. Now that we have a high standard of living, we can well afford to devote more attention to the family. A program for revitalizing the traditional family might include:

1. *Matching of prospective bride and groom.* Good marriages should begin with good dating. Computerized dating services, though still in a primitive state, suggest what might be done to match up people with compatible characteristics. Only too often nowadays, people often fail to make contact with potential mates with whom they could be really compatible. Instead they find themselves dating—and even falling in love with—people with whom they really have little in common.

2. *Training for marriage.* Schools could provide young people with more courses in marriage and parenthood, including not only sex educa-

tion but money management, child training, and dealing with interpersonal disputes. Better training could help prevent teenage pregnancy, which leads often to marital failure or to the production of children who are unlikely to receive adequate emotional support in their development.

3. *Stronger efforts to improve emotional development.* Many marriages fail because of the emotional immaturity of one or both of the partners. Programs could be instituted—starting perhaps in the schools—to identify people's emotional problems and assist them in overcoming them. Communities could provide psychiatric and other types of counseling to help individuals maintain good family relationships.

4. *Community stability.* The instability of communities due to the high mobility of the population contributes to the failure of marriages. Mothers with children need neighbors whom they can talk to and leave their children with occasionally. A variety of techniques could be used to increase community stability including, for example, fines imposed on companies that require their employees to move a long distance from one assignment to another.

5. *Incorporation of families.* David P. Snyder, the Life-Styles editor of *THE FUTURIST*, has suggested that families could be strengthened by allowing them legally to incorporate themselves. Such incorporation might provide a variety of tax and other benefits that would help to stabilize families. A sixth and last scenario focuses on artificial families.

Scenario VI: Artificial Families

The argument for the creation of artificial families might go something like this: The traditional family has failed because it simply does not meet the needs of modern man. Permanent units based on blood relationships are simply a holdover from man's primitive past. The traditional family was never very good: There were endless problems—physical and verbal abuse, sibling rivalry, Oedipus and Electra complexes, incest, the subjugation of children, prodigal sons, adolescent rebellion, etc. Something radically different is needed.

Already there are a number of developments that suggest a general movement toward the creation of artificial families. Many communes and collectives have much of the character of families. Some churches have encouraged the development of artificial extended families by assigning individuals to a couple, which forms the nucleus of the artificial family. This couple adopts them as family members. The enlarged family gets together for recreational and other activities and provides mutual assistance in times of need.

One factor encouraging the development of artificial families is the disintegration of the natural family. Many people now find themselves without a natural family that they can really relate to. When family members are very widely scattered, the family can no longer function as the

traditional family once did, and artificial families might be able to fill the void.

Artificial families also might allow people to play roles they cannot easily play in today's society and perhaps gain new insights into themselves. For instance, a boy of 13 might be given the role of mother to three children or a woman of 40 might be assigned to be the baby in a family and have no responsibilities.

Choosing a Future

There is no need to select one scenario as best either from the standpoint of desirability or likelihood of realization. In fact, my guess is that each of the scenarios will be realized in some degree during the years ahead. What we do not know is what will be the dominant family forms at various periods of the future.

The family of the future is something that we ourselves must decide and since we have not yet rendered our collective decision the future of the family remains undecided. The family will be what we make it to be. If we want to abolish the family, we can do it. If we want to revitalize the family, we can do it. If we want to see the family slowly dissolve in a swelling tide of divorce, we can achieve that too. So our task really is to decide what it is we want.

The family is intimately interconnected with all aspects of our society. It's simply impossible to choose one type of family and pay no attention to such other aspects of our lives as our patterns of work, our technology, our educational system, and so on. Each family is a social system which exists within the whole congeries of other social systems which comprise the human enterprise. So to understand the family and think about its future we must look at what is happening in other areas.

Two areas seem to me of special importance during the 1980s: the global economic system and the communications and computer technology that is now developing. Developments in these areas may have crucial impact on the family in the next few years.

The first is the deterioration of the world economy. In my judgment, we may be on the verge of a global depression. If it does indeed arrive, the impact on the family could be extremely powerful. In the United States, we could see a revival of relatives moving together because of economic hardship. There are some signs that this may already be happening. Many young people find themselves unable to afford homes of their own and continue to live with their parents after they become adults. The high cost of nursing homes has also made it difficult for many people to find places outside their homes for their elderly parents.

Economic hardship could lead to a decline in sexual permissiveness and a revival of clearly defined gender roles for men and women. During hard times, people may be willing to sacrifice a certain amount of individuality, freedom, and pleasure for greater security. In the past, people depended heavily on the family to give them security; if the government

fails to maintain a smoothly functioning economic system, the family may be revived as people struggle to find a way to meet their needs for security.

Meanwhile, new communications and information technology may greatly change family life. During the 1980's, a variety of electronic technologies that very few people use today will become common items of ordinary life. For instance, today only a relatively few homes have videotape recorders or videodisc players, but by 1990, most homes will have this new video technology. It will open up a whole new world of education, entertainment, and information services. Increasingly, people will have large libraries of motion pictures, television shows, books, educational courses, and other materials in these video formats.

At the same time, computer technology will be moving into U.S. homes in a massive way. By 1990 more than half the homes in the U.S. will probably have at least one computer or computer terminal, and people will be using computers for all kinds of things—ordering groceries, doing their income tax, learning statistics, and chatting with their friends.

But the world economy and the new electronic technology will not, by themselves, determine the shape of tomorrow's family. What the family becomes will depend on what people decide to do, especially on the kind of families they make for themselves.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a few suggestions concerning what we can do to have better families and home life in the future—assuming that is what we want.

First and foremost, I believe we need to recognize clearly that we are responsible for the future. The future does not just happen to us. We *create* the future, both for ourselves and for others. We need to get that fact clearly in mind. We can create a good future for the family, if that's what we want.

Second, we can create a better future for the family *by thinking seriously about its future*. We need to explore the various possibilities that the family has so that we can begin to take steps to achieve for the family the future we desire for it. When we understand the possibilities of the future, we are better able to create a better future.

Third, we need to think about the future in very broad terms. When we start thinking about the future of the family, we must be very much aware of how the family will be affected by developments in other areas. The family cannot be isolated from what happens in the economy, the schools, and so on.

Fourth, we need to support large-scale research efforts aiming at understanding such broad social issues as family life. These efforts are inherently difficult, not only because of the complexity of the issues but because they involve us in value. But research efforts in these areas can be enormously rewarding, because they can help us to understand more clearly the devices that we face.

The family's future is an undecided future. It is an open future—a future that we must create. But as time passes, the "future" becomes the "past"—choices are made, consciously or unconsciously, wisely or fool-

ishly. If we want to revitalize the family during the next 10 years, we can do it; if we want to see the family dissolve in a rising tide of divorce, we can do it. If we want to create artificial families or abolish the nature family, we can do those things, too. The future of the family is ours to decide. But let us try to decide wisely, because the family is the basic unit of society.

Achieving a "Fit" Between Military Families, Military Communities and Family Life Centers

Hamilton I. McCubbin, PH.D., and
Joan M. Patterson

It seems like only yesterday that the military was a "single" man's army. As recently as 1952, the marriage rate for enlisted personnel was as low as 29.7 percent. In the "old" military, the saying, "if Uncle Sam wanted you to have a wife, he would have issued you one," had very special meaning and served as a warning against family interference with the demands of military life. It also served as a reminder of the importance of unit solidarity and the priority of the military mission. Morris Janowitz (1965) pointed out that in the single man's army, "the problem of choosing between work and family life did not exist." A military organization and community evolved emphasizing esprit de corps. The military family was viewed as an integral part of this total mission which defined the role of the family in terms of the husband's rank and social status in the system. The predominant attitude which prevailed was that the family, in particular the serviceman's spouse, played an important but subordinate role in the husband's career. Satisfied with the status of the military family, the military community was not particularly concerned with the search for knowledge about family development and functioning. There was no need to develop a "science" of community programs supportive of military families. Social and psychological problems were absorbed by the military community; the military took care of its own. The fit between the military family and the military community was taken for granted; in reciprocal fashion, they encouraged and supported each other (McCubbin and Dahl, 1976).

Conditions have changed in the military. In attempting to keep pace with the move toward equal opportunity for both sexes, the military establishment has continued to recruit more women and has developed more diverse career options for them. With this have come new challenges, policies and programs attempting to deal with predictable issues of: the role of the "dependent" husband whose wife is a service member; the role of the "dependent" military wife who has taken on a career of her own; single



Hamilton I. McCubbin, Professor and Head, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, is a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve and the author of several publications on the Military Family, his most recent on the *Decade Review: Family Stress and Coping*.

Joan M. Patterson, Research Assistant, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, is a family therapist and social scientist involved in the study of family coping with handicapped children and stress in the military. Her picture was unavailable at the time of publication.

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parent mothers and single parent fathers who are military members; personal practices and policies governing child care for single parents and for two career members (couples) who are both members of the armed services—just to mention a few of the more obvious ones.

The diversity of family forms, changes in relationships within the family unit, such as two wage earners, all signal the impact of social change upon the military and particularly the military family. This is added to the already long list of traditional issues facing the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. The hardships of family relocations, family social isolation in foreign countries, family temporary and unaccompanied assignments, the potential of war, child care for the handicapped, and the quality of child care in general are now normative issues facing policy makers and personnel managers who have limited budgets and an unchanging military mission.

Directly and indirectly, these issues are also part of the challenges set for Army Chaplains and their Family Life Centers. Since the early 1970s when Family Life Centers were first established, there has been rapid growth in this unique form of family life ministry with its very broad mission to provide an environment of pastoral concern through which soldiers and their families are offered opportunities to nurture positive family relationships increasing their quality of life. Family Life Centers, formed in response to special or identified needs at Army posts, have a critical and vital role to play in strengthening individual soldiers, their marriages and their families by focusing on reconciliation, problem prevention, pastoral counseling, and family education and enrichment. The clear pastoral focus of a Family Life Center does not preclude its linkage to other helping persons and agencies through consultation, cooperation and referral, thus making it a total community program. Because clergy are frequently the first contact of a family in trouble, the mission of Army chaplains and Family Life Centers is especially crucial.

Given this complex and demanding situation, what then might social scientists offer Army chaplains in their family life ministry? This paper attempts to address this question, not with the expectation that it will revolutionize any program, but with the belief that social science research conducted to date may have some bearing upon pastoral goals. Specifically, we attempt to address two fundamental issues:

First, assuming that Army Chaplains feel Family Life Centers are operating effectively to meet the family needs of soldiers, then we might ask whether research conducted on military families reveals any direct or indirect support of this assumption. To restate the issue, can the value of family oriented pastoral programs offered by chaplains be substantiated by family research and if so, what is it about these programs which promotes the well-being of military families?

Second, assuming that we substantiate the value of a family oriented pastoral approach in supporting the military mission and its personnel, we need to ask what specific aspects of family functioning are

sensitive to Chaplains' interventions and will facilitate family adjustment to the hardships of life in the military.

This paper attempts to address these two issues by examining family research conducted at the University of Minnesota in collaboration with other family research programs throughout the United States. Specifically, we will analyze two recent investigations which indicate that the development of community social supports and the strengthening of family coping are viable targets for Army chaplains' family life ministry. By focusing upon social support and coping, we can anticipate the development of a stronger bond or "fit" between the military community and the military family which in turn will support the military mission.

Challenge 1: Developing Community Social Support

In the first study, we hypothesized that family units with a strong array of both intra-family strengths and community based social supports would be less vulnerable to having a stressor event such as family separation lead to family dysfunction. The subjects for this investigation were 82 families of officer and enlisted personnel scheduled for an eight month separation (McCubbin and Patterson, 1981). These wives averaged 29 years of age with 13.5 years of formal education and an average of two children. For the majority (57.3%), this was their first military induced family separation of such length.

Data reported here were obtained from in-depth structured interviews and self-report questionnaires completed one to four months BEFORE the separation and from follow-up family interviews conducted four to six months INTO the separation. Family strengths were measured by using a checklist of nine items reflecting how prepared the family was for the separation. To accomplish this list of items (e.g. establishing a legal will and power of attorney), family members, particularly the husband and wife, would have needed to openly share feelings and concerns about sensitive family issues such as trust and independence. The family interviews also included a checklist of items reflecting family-community social supports or how wives viewed their relationship with the military community. Two dimensions of social support were measured: (a) social integration—that is the degree to which wives felt a part of the community and military life by participating in its activities (such as volunteers) and accepting the military life style; and (b) social acceptance—that is the degree to which they felt they could use the medical and social programs available to them without being judged by peers and the military community as being "weak or inadequate."

To assess the strain wives experience during the separation, the Duke Health Inventory was administered before the separation and during the separation. This questionnaire provided a criterion measure of wives' emotional adjustment—that is whether or not there was an increase in the use of prescribed drugs (sleeping pills, tranquilizers, antidepressants

and/or narcotics) for the management of strain and tension. This dependent variable was selected because it provided an index of *change* in substance use reported before deployment and the wives' follow-up report of use during the separation. Additionally, this measure has concurrent validity with the more well referenced symptoms of emotional strain also recorded in the health inventory (anxiety, sleeplessness, etc.) and stress-reducing drugs commonly prescribed in the treatment of wives who experience emotional difficulties in managing the hardships of family separation.

Wives who indicated an increase in the use of chemical supports were matched with wives who did not use any substances before or during the separation. In addition, these wives were matched on the number of "stressors" they experienced before the separation, on age, educational level, number of children, and husband's rank. These matched groups were compared on the basis of three indices reflecting family strengths (preparation) and social support (integration and acceptance). If the community is important and if the family's internal strengths are in fact important, we would expect that significant differences would emerge.

Findings

As hypothesized, the two groups were significantly different on all three dimensions: the non-chemical group appeared to possess more family strengths in terms of family preparation for the separation as well as a greater sense of social support as reflected in their perception of being more a part of the military community. These differences emerged even after stressors before the separation, age, education, number of children, and husband's rank were taken into consideration.

Family strengths and community social support appear to act as buffers against the impact of family separations. The development of family strengths, particularly in the areas of marital communication around trust, independence and specific plans in anticipation of a separation, appear to have importance in helping families to face and cope with stressors. Equally important, social support, achieved through the family members' transactions with the community, is an important preparatory step in the family's efforts to cope with future stressors. When considered together, social integration and social acceptance offer family members, and particularly wives, the very basic and fundamental elements of what Sidney Cobb (1976) refers to as social support. Three vital elements of social support are suggested in this study as integral and valued parts of the military community: (a) emotional support—leading the family member(s) to believe that he/she is cared for and appreciated; (b) esteem support—leading the family member(s) to believe that he/she is esteemed and valued, and (c) network support—leading the family member(s) to believe he/she belongs to a network of communication involving mutual obligation and mutual understanding.

In contrast to previous family separation studies in the armed

forces which accentuate the need for family and community oriented programs to aid families during the separation, this investigation underscores the value of investments in prevention (pre-separation) oriented programs. Preparing families for hardships by focusing on strengthening family life and enhancing their relationship and involvement in the community seem like reasonable and highly desirable targets for Army Chaplains, as well as family and mental health professionals responsible for the care and support of families in the military. There is mounting evidence that community oriented programs which foster the development of social support will continue to pay dividends in the future in support of family life in the military. While it remains to be tested empirically that Family Life Centers and similar programs throughout the military really have a lasting impact on family life, studies such as the one just described may be offered as interim evidence that we are on the right track.

Challenge 2: Development of Family Coping Behavior

Coping has been viewed as both a psychological resource and as a behavioral repertoire (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). In our second investigation involving the same 82 families described above in the first study, we assessed family coping to determine what were the coping patterns wives employed which were most helpful in managing the hardships of family separations. Six coping patterns emerged as important mitigators of stress:

Coping I: Maintaining Family Integration. Wives who made an effort to keep the family working together as a unit experienced less distress. Coping behaviors such as “doing more things with the children” are vitally important. Just because families live under the same roof, it does not mean they always do things together. Family togetherness must be stimulated, developed, and planned, particularly during periods of stress.

Coping II: Developing Self Reliance and Self Esteem. Wives benefited from efforts to care for themselves as individuals and persons. “Keeping healthy and in good physical shape, becoming more independent, learning new skills, and developing oneself as a person” are important behaviors which enhance family members’ ability to endure change and manage stress.

Coping III: Acceptance of Lifestyle and Optimism. Work and the family must achieve a “fit” which is ultimately supportive of family life. Wives who made an effort to “maintain an optimistic outlook on the work-family situation, accept their husband’s profession and this style of life” were better able to manage the hardships which their spouses or their own work situation placed on family life.

Coping IV: Managing Tension and Strain. Tension and conflicts are a predictable part of family life and are usually exacerbated when stressful life events are experienced. Wives who developed and used a range of “tension management devices” such as “crying, watching television, taking

advantage of benefits available to the family, hobbies, and keeping involved in activities" were better able to manage the hardships of a family separation.

Coping V: Developing Social Support. Families under stress appear to benefit from efforts to strengthen their ties with the community. Wives, in this case, developed social support (emotional, esteem, and network, as described earlier) as a buffer against the stressful event of separation.

Coping VI: Balanced Coping. While all five coping patterns were independently important as mitigators of distress, wives who developed and used all five strategies in a balanced (i.e., a higher than average score on all five patterns) manner were best equipped to handle the hardships of this separation. Coping, therefore, involves the ability to simultaneously attend to family needs, develop social support, manage tensions, attend to personal needs for self esteem and independence, and maintain an optimistic view of life's predictable and unpredictable demands.

Coping with change and stress in the military appears to be a process of checks and balances. Families who are most able to manage family changes are those committed to family integrity and who make an effort to keep the unit functioning together. Equally important, although often overlooked, is the value of parent/spouse efforts simultaneously to care for themselves by attending to their own growth and emotional satisfaction. Not only are they better able to cope, but they also are better able to attend to the family's needs in time of stress.

The research on coping was carried one step further. In examining the two groups of military separated families described above, (i.e., the distressed wives who increased their use of stress related drugs during the separation versus the non-distressed wives who did not use stress related drugs), we noticed two major findings. First, two of the five coping patterns emerged as being of paramount importance in distinguishing non-distressed from distressed wives: (a) acceptance of lifestyle and optimism and (b) developing self reliance and self esteem. Second, the most prominent difference in coping was that the non-distressed wives were much more likely to use a balanced coping strategy (reflecting the use of a full range of coping patterns) than distressed wives (McCubbin and Patterson, 1981).

Challenge 3: Bridging the Military Family and Family Life Centers

These two investigations bring us back to our original thesis that social science research renders some support to the vital complementary relationship between programs designed to strengthen the military community and the enhancement of family life. The picture of family adaptation to life in the military and the normal hardships associated with this profession and its unique mission to defend this country and its allies, depicts the military

family as involved in an active process of coping by managing resources and strengths with itself and by securing social support from the community.

Coping behaviors appear to be able to (a) decrease the presence of vulnerability factors (e.g., emotional instability, financial instability, etc.), (b) strengthen or maintain those family resources (cohesiveness, expressiveness, etc.) which serve to protect the family from harm or disruption, (c) reduce or eliminate stressful circumstances and hardships (illness, conflict etc.), and (d) influence the community by shaping social conditions that are more supportive of family life and stability (e.g., more benefits, higher pay). A close examination of these coping patterns and their objectives reveal a range of targets which are already part of Army chaplains' ministry and which can be used towards the development of future programs.

A most important underlying theme emerging not only from these two investigations on military families but also from this past decade of family stress research on diverse family situations, is the central role of the community in promoting family well being and stability. Neighborhoods, for example, provide an important source of assistance for short-term problems. Family and kinship networks have and will continue to be a source of support, practical service and concrete aid, as well as a haven for rest and recuperation. Mutual self-help groups, that is associations of individuals or family units who share the same problem or predicaments, will band together for the purpose of mutual aid and support. In the 1970's, self-help groups were formed for families of prisoners of war, families of handicapped children, parents who abuse children, widows, foreign born wives, single parents, divorced parents, and families of hostages, to name a few.

We have seen a wealth of research pointing to the powerful influence of social support against the complications of pregnancy and childbirth; in promoting medical compliance with such diseases as hypertension; in reducing mortality, as in the case of heart disease. Investigators have indicated that social support makes individuals and family units less vulnerable to crises when they experience stressors such as job termination, a difficult work environment, and retirement. Certainly, this list of research observations and finding suggests the vital role which community-based and community-oriented programs play in support of family life, particularly in the military.

Summary and Conclusions: Challenges of Tomorrow

The U.S. military has witnessed the termination of the selective service system, significant increases to make military salaries more competitive with civilian salaries, and efforts to eliminate or reduce a host of military benefits to active-duty personnel, veterans, retirees, and military families. These policies suggest the development of a professional military with the

characteristics of an occupation. Essentially, this trend represents a shift in philosophy from the traditional military legitimated by values and norms that underscored a "purpose" transcending individual and family self-interests in favor of a presumed good—the defense of the country. In the traditional view, military members and their families were guided by principles of self sacrifice and dedication. They received compensation for their efforts from an array of social supports that underscore the intent of the institution to "take care of its own" and set itself apart from the general society. In contrast, the emerging occupational model is legitimated by a marketplace that provides monetary rewards for equivalent skills. A major characteristic of this occupational orientation to the military is that members and their families exercise some influence in the determination of appropriate salary and working conditions. This shift in emphasis suggests a shift in the role of the military family from a passive dependent to a prominent and influential social unit within the military. The emerging situation gives greater legitimacy to the expression and consideration of family concerns and priorities that were often set aside as part of the military tradition and norms. The enigmatic aspects of military life, such as separations, deployments, forced relocations, fluctuating benefits and programs were taken for granted in the traditional military. In the new occupational format, they become negotiable contractual items subject to some family influence. Within this framework, the military family cannot be taken for granted.

This situation places a heavy burden of responsibility upon the military community, particularly those programs, such as Family Life Centers who task themselves with nurturing functional family relationships in the face of social change. The challenge is immediate and difficult, that is to create a military community which works to strengthen the relationship between the family and the military.

The social science research conducted to date, which is reflected in the two studies noted here, can offer military chaplains avenues and strategies for the development of a community supportive of family functioning. A careful assessment of the community based programs advanced and developed to date would reveal the important role Army chaplains have and will continue to play in the military program and in support of the military's mission. The studies described here suggest that if there is a serious commitment to strengthening the quality of life in the military, to strengthening the military family, to creating a meaningful fit between the military family and the military, it is a challenge to Army chaplains and Family Life Centers to help this become a reality.

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Public Religion In American Culture

John F. Wilson

Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA; 1979

The author says of this book that it was written "in response to the suggestion that [he] develop a sustained essay on the subject of civil religion in our society." After outlining some personal motivational considerations, he presents some professional concerns: "While the interpretation of religion in American culture has been a vital field of scholarly research and teaching for the last several decades, there is consensus that different paradigms may now be required, that new interpretive concepts and frameworks must be fostered. Much interest has been prompted by the Civil Religion proposal [of Robert Bellah in 1967] because it seems so promising in just these broader respects. In this perspective the study is an inquiry into the utility of Public Religion—[his] preferred term...—as a working concept for students of American religious history." The book is not, he emphasizes, "a chronicle of Public Religion in American history and culture....Nor is [it] a broader interpretation of American religious history from the point of view of Public Religion." Rather, it is an attempt at "clarification and delimitation of the controlling concept" necessary to a reinterpretation of that history, "reflective analysis about constructs as a prerequisite to development of the study of American religious history." The aim is to "[move] toward conclusions, if...not reach them in a definitive sense. Thus the Public Religion question [remains] under discussion throughout the study even as it is at the beginning. In the course of the analysis, however, the topic [will be seen to] have ramified and become more complex by virtue of continuing introduction of additional considerations and critical perspectives."

After a chapter of "analysis of our present situation," which includes the circumstances and impact of Bellah's 1967 *Daedalus* article on "Civil Religion in America," the author focuses attention on "the religious materials in the public realm which pose the problem before us—the mythic materials centered on the polity which are cultural given." Subsequent chapters present "systematic and formal analysis of four aspects of the culture in which evidence for civic piety is alleged to be manifest. These...are: (1) strictly linguistic formulations of American religious identity delivered by our presidents; (2) ritual or stylized behavior in the collective life which points toward the social reality of this democratic republic; (3) the array of "meanings" commonly attributed to the American nation; (4) the institutions which might be viewed as supporting a positive public religion or civic cult." There is a final chapter that "turns directly to more strictly theoretical issues of the interpretation of public religion in America," followed by an "epilogue [that] suggests an interpretation of the civil religion proposal as a religious movement in its own right." In sum, the author points out, "the logic of the study flows from more empirical to more theoretical concerns, or from problems of evidence to interpretive issues. The overarching thesis is that these different kinds of questions cannot be separated and that the civil religion discussion to date has been severely flawed by failure to observe this constraint. Beyond sustaining that position, the study should establish the point, beyond reasonable doubt, that public religion in American society deserves serious attention."

Chaplain's are part of the "data which can be construed as evidence that there is a public religion," according to this monograph. That ought to arouse enough self-conscious intellectual interest among readers of this review to move you to read this book. It is well written and organized, germane, synoptic, and scholarly. What more could one desire for some solid summer reading?

John F. Wilson is Professor of Religion at Princeton University and a former president of the Church History Association. He is author of *Pulpit and Parliament* and co-author of *Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays*.

— William E. Paul, Jr.

Finding Hope Again: A Pastor's Guide To Counseling Depressed Persons

Roy W. Fairchild

Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, NY; 1980

The author's "Preface" to this compact and helpful volume makes clear for the reader what circumstances prompted its writing: "No counselor today can fail to notice the staggering number of despondent people in his community. And no pastor has to look very far to see the faces of depression in his congregation....Pastors, too, find themselves in periods of discouragement, if not depression, unable to move out of their inertia and apathy. What the psychological disciplines have called *depression* has been known and portrayed through all recorded history. The nomenclature may be as young as society, but the experience is as old as the race....I have written this book to help pastors, counselors, and other care-givers to better understand depression and to provide the kind of care which may help lift the misery of melancholy and to activate hope in the sufferer's life....The viewpoint of this book is that depression is not only a matter for psychiatry and clinical psychology; it is a major concern of philosophy and theology as well."

The rather slim volume—136 pages of text plus chapter notes, a selected bibliography, and an "Index"—is nevertheless bound to become one of the most immediately useful texts in many chaplains' personal counseling libraries. It is experientially motivated, based on sound scholarship, and distinctly pastoral in orientation. It is also thoroughly honest and forthright regarding its subject.

Dr. Fairchild views depression in terms of a biblical metaphor, that is, "as a wilderness journey, symbolizing the experience of being lost in a desert place, lonely, without water flowing, and in great danger from thorns and beasts. But it is also a place where angels minister, where persons have found transformation, a new identity, and direction. Depression is a painful situation out of which much growth can come." That expresses the essence of the spirit of his book.

He first examines "The Many Faces of Depression," a brief review of the "Family of Symptoms" that constitute depression. Included in this opening chapter are four story examples of "Pastoral Situations in the Contemporary Church" to which he alludes throughout the book. Next comes a chapter regarding the causes of depression, which focuses on "several of the factors...that are most strongly supported in the dominant theories." Chapter 3 looks at pastoral care as it relates to loss of hope in depression, including a "brief exposition of the meanings of hope." There follows a consideration of the matter of pastoral encounters with depressed persons in the course of ministry and achieving "a ministry of meaning" to such persons, that is, attitudes and actions that relate to the sustaining, guiding, and reconciling functions of pastoral care. The 5th chapter concerns discernment of the need for referral of the depressed to specialists in the mental health field and areas in which pastoral counseling may be sufficient. A 6th chapter deals with "strategies...designed to be used, as appropriate," when involved with "the mildly or moderately depressed, whose low moods are related to identifiable kinds of stress or losses." The final chapter, "Nurturing Hope in the Church," examines "the context of a community of faith" in which the pastor ministers, the congregation and its leadership, with particular attention to handling depression-fostering attitudes and teachings as well as developing a dynamic sense of hope.

Roy W. Fairchild is John K. McLennan Professor of Education and Social Psychol-

ogy at San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. He is also on the Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union of Berkeley, California. He was for three years Associate Director of Family Research for the United Presbyterian Church; for six years he taught psychology at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. He is an ordained Presbyterian minister and has served on the staff of two churches and as a university pastor. He is a certified marriage, family, and child counselor. He is author of *Christians in Families*, *The Waiting Game*, and other books and published articles.

— — William E. Paul, Jr.

Fundamental Moral Theology

Franz Boeckle

Pueblo Publishing Company, Inc., New York, NY; 1980

In his "Foreword," the author of this enlightening study begins by saying, "There is clearly no end in sight to the task of renewing the structure of moral theology." He then indulges in a little extended metaphor about architects and builders involved in renovation of that structure. He sees no need for anxiety about modern experimentation in the field. It is essential, he notes, in order "to see whether the building can be safely erected and sustained and at the same time to find out whether it can be given a successful contemporary expression." Experimentation requires repeated critical looks "at the building as a whole," however, lest the non-architect/non-builder become confused by what has been going on. To the uninitiated, there might well be an "impression that whole walls and roofs had been taken away and well-known parts of the structure...removed," creating doubts about "whether anything of equal value was ready to take their place. In the meantime, the work of many of the builders has succeeded so well that it is possible to go on a tour of inspection and at least gain some idea of the basic structure of the renewed form of moral theology." This book is such an inspection tour, guided by the author.

It is emphasized by the guide that "it is chiefly the fundamental problems of moral theology that have been discussed in an international dialogue of specialists over the last fifteen years or so," that is, since the Second Vatican Council. The dialogue has included "everyone who is in any way preoccupied with the need to improve social order. The questions—including those asked critically of theology and the Church—are heard. Consideration has been given to the specific contribution that can be made by Christian ethics and to the possibility of a wider social consensus of opinion about fundamental questions of moral norms." Current fundamental moral theology tries "to introduce important aspects of philosophical, sociological, and theological principles." The aim is "to find a well-founded answer to concrete moral questions, an answer that will both be universally valid and also give the individual latitude and the certainty that he needs in his own decisions." While conscience is not specifically considered—Boeckle feels that "the psychology of the human conscience [is better left] to others who are more competent than [he is]"—nevertheless "the whole of the book has to do with moral judgment and its foundation."

The guided tour begins with a general orientation, "The Concept and Task of Fundamental Moral Theology." The tourist is then led into a discussion of "Man between Claim and Fulfillment," the first of two parts of the tour; here is discussed "the ultimate ground of the moral claim made on man" and the "greatness, but also danger, in man's moral autonomy." This part of the tour is heavy going, concerned as it is with concepts of "Normative Reality," "Freedom of Choice," "The Claim to Autonomy," and the like; also, with guilt and sin, and "Jesus' Liberating Effect." The second part of the tour moves through more familiar but no less difficult areas of the renovation project, "the renewed form of moral theology." It looks at "The Biblical Foundation," the matters of "Nature, Experience and Reason," and "The

Church's Contribution," all grouped beneath the heading, "Fundamental Problems in the Justification of Norms." Some 55 pages of chapter "Notes" and an "Index" complete the tour.

Christian chaplains of whatever stripe ought to take this guided tour. The guide himself is obviously very competent indeed, and no one can deny the need for a critical and continuing look at "the basic structure of the renewed form of moral theology." The present state of moral affairs makes it imperative for chaplains to keep up with what is new and worthwhile in scholarship associated with fundamental moral theological principles.

Franz Boeckle is Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Bonn, Germany. His book, published in German in 1977, has been translated by N.D. Smith.

William E. Paul, Jr.

Issues In The Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Edited by Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki

Paulist Press, New York, NY; 1979

What Are They Saying About Christian-Jewish Relations?

John T. Pawlikowski

Paulist Press, New York, NY; 1980

The long history of the Jewish people includes a concomitant story of frequent powerful anti-Jewish agitation on the part of those among whom they live. Whatever the root causes of such agitation—usually but inaccurately referred to as antisemitism—it persists into the present, in varying degrees of intensity, wherever Jews congregate. Since the time of the Nazi Holocaust, among various efforts to improve the overall situation and particularly as a result of pronouncements from Vatican II, there has developed a Catholic-Protestant-Jewish dialogue concerning Christian-Jewish relations. This dialogue includes the fruit of modern biblical, theological and religious education studies by individuals and groups, mostly in Western society, aimed at radical improvement of understanding and performance in such inter-religious relations. The two books reviewed here are recent and important additions to the continuing dialogue.

The Croner/Klenicki volume is "A Stimulus Book," sponsored by the Stimulus Foundation formed by publisher Helga Croner "to promote translations and publication of works relevant to understanding between Christians and Jews."

The subtitle, *Jewish Perspectives on Covenant, Mission and Witness*, reveals the basic outline of the book's contents. In her foreword, Croner presents the point of view: "This volume...addresses itself to some of the basic issues of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, raised by the various statements of Christian churches...published over the last several years. More than that: This book presents the reaction of some Jewish scholars to problems of our day that move and impel them to speak their mind. The Editors hope to offer...a representative picture of contemporary Jewish thought as well as to indicate new dimensions for the interreligious dialogue....The relevant Christian documents are collected in volume I of this Series, under the title *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents*."

Klenicki's "Introduction..." offers a guide to the contents of the book: "The present

collection of essays represents the reflective response of a group of religious persons deeply concerned about Jewish faith and commitment in our time. This preoccupation is mirrored in the search for new meanings, new interpretations that will give to Jewish life the dimension of a living faith. The authors look into our tradition and at the spiritual tools of our time, in search of meaning and of a language to express that meaning." There follow paragraphs offering brief synopses of what each of the seven essayists has to say regarding "Covenant" or "Witness and Mission."

This is a moving and scholarly addition to the Jewish-Christian dialogue. The contributors are persons of merited stature and influence in Jewish religious and academic circles as well as active participants in the interreligious dialogue. Their essays in this volume are original, previously unpublished material. Every chaplain needs to well acquainted with this collection.

Helga Croner has been a publisher for many years in England and the United States. As previously mentioned, she was the organizer of the Stimulus Foundation, a not-for-profit organization whose books are published by Paulist Press. The Foundation was established by an anonymous one-time refugee from Nazi Germany "who intends to contribute with these publications to the improvement of communication between Jews and Christians."

Rabbi Leon Klenicki is Director of the Department of Jewish-Catholic Relations, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. He is Associate Editor of *Face to Face: An Interreligious Bulletin* and teaches courses at Immaculate Conception Seminary, New Jersey, on "Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity" and "Jewish Understanding of Christianity, from Rabbinic Times to the 20th Century."

What Are They Saying About Christian-Jewish Relations? is also part of a series, now numbering some eight paperback volumes. In this book, the author very briefly traces the history of the "new climate in the relations between Judaism and Christianity" created by the Vatican II declaration *Nostra Aetate*. He notes that "despite the evident progress since Vatican II," there is a pervasive feeling in "some circles" that "the Jewish/Christian dialogue is dead..."; he strongly contradicts this claim and cites "a slow but steady increase in Christian study of Judaism and in Christian-Jewish conversation, especially at the grass roots level....the seeds for further development have definitely been sown during the period since Vatican II." Because "the dialogue has a significant future, it is important to spell out where the two faith communities have come thus far in their encounter and what issues need to be confronted in the years ahead." This book "is an attempt to delineate the major issues and how various Christians and Jews are presently looking at them. In a work of this size it is impossible to present all perspectives and to treat all relevant questions. But there is little doubt that the topics covered in the following pages will remain central to any authentic dialogue for the foreseeable future."

In six bibliographical essays, Pawlikowski reviews what is being said in print about "The Deicide Charge and New Testament Anti-Semitism"; "Christian Theology and the Jewish Covenant"; "Jewish Views of Christianity"; "Jesus and the Pharisaic Tradition"; "Christian Theology and the Jewish Land Tradition"; and "Theological Perspectives on the Nazi Holocaust." In a sixth essay he presents some "Final Reflections." Here he states that, "From the wide-ranging number of Jewish and Christian sources dealing with the church-synagogue encounter examined in the preceding chapters it should be clear that any claim that the dialogue is dead simply ignores the facts at hand." He then suggests some areas for greater concern, that is, that Christian churches *everywhere*, non-Western as well as Western, become involved in the dialogue; also, that there be an attempt "to relate the Christian-Jewish dialogue to the wider interreligious encounter," particularly Islam; further, an "expansion of the interreligious dialogue, the Christian-Jewish dialogue included, from exclusive concentration on theological topics to a concern with major world social issues such as hunger, energy and warfare"; and finally, the "special need to use the dialogue between Christians and Jews as a way of coming to grips with the current cultural crisis" in the Western world, that is, the "unprecedented sense of personal freedom—call it a Prometheus Unbound experience—which is leading to a rejection of imposed values from religious sources or elsewhere," even as "people are genuinely searching for values and a new spirituality." There is a need for a

common effort toward shaping "the public and private values of this new society that is being born in our midst." In short, "the interfaith dialogue takes on an importance far beyond the limited scope of improving Christian-Jewish relations."

This is a most valuable and useful review of an increasingly important segment of the current religious and cultural situation. As incidents of anti-Jewish agitation escalate in our own and other societies, there is an urgency about obtaining factual information about updated research and exegesis. This little book can play a large role in this regard. Chaplains will find it a vitally important help in fulfilling their responsibilities as preachers and community leaders.

John T. Pawlikowski is a priest of the Servite order who is on the faculty of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He is also a member of the United States Bishops' Secretariate on Catholic-Jewish Relations.

—William E. Paul, Jr.

Interpreting The Gospels For Preaching

D. Moody Smith

Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA; 1980

Preaching is itself an organic part of the biblical message for most ministers; therefore, it is obviously not a casual option because God participates in the ongoing human struggle through the preaching of his word. That means that it behooves the preacher to know what he/she is doing when preaching. This soft cover book of 118 pages is a source of much help toward achieving that kind of knowledge.

Dr. Smith, erstwhile student of the late James T. Cleland of Duke University Divinity School, learned from the latter that preaching, "the exposition of the word of God on the basis of Scripture in ever-changing human situations," demands "exegesis," interpretation that is historically defensible..." His book, which "is not about preaching per se or about the Gospels per se, [is] about the nexus between them." The author is fully aware "that effective Christian preaching demands more—although not less—than exegetical insight." He makes no effort to "define preaching or to contribute to its development as a discipline, except insofar as the discussion of preaching from the Gospels may contribute to such definition and development." He doesn't deal "with questions of gospel criticism or even interpretation except as they may contribute to understanding and accomplishing the work of preaching. [He has] in general adopted the position of widest consensus on questions on New Testament scholarship. This means, for example, that the Marcan, or two-document, hypothesis is accepted, as well as the basic insights and perspectives—although not all the varied and in some respects contradictory results of form and redaction criticism." He acknowledges that his endeavor leaves unexplored "some new pathways of literary criticism and structuralism that have opened up within the last decade...But the kinds of considerations presented here are in [his] judgment necessary, important, and potentially quite helpful for preaching. Such historically oriented questions are not optional, but germane to Christian interpretation. In much of the preaching we hear today these questions are not taken into account, and it therefore seemed worthwhile to call attention to them in this way." In summary, "This book is...intended to be a kind of summation of the bearing of modern gospel criticism upon the task of interpreting the Gospels for preaching."

Having established his personal orientation and aims, the author turns to the business of analysis and interpretation for his readers. He begins with a section on "Gospel Criticism

and Exegesis for Preaching,” which includes critical essays on the historical, then the form-critical, and finally the redaction-critical Gospel preaching perspectives. Part Two, “Preaching from the Synoptic Gospels: Some Paradigms and Specimens,” offers examples of analysis of selected texts “of preaching length” from all of the perspectives previously considered, then asking about each one “how it will preach or how one should preach it.” Part Three considers “Preaching from the Gospel of John: A Different but Related task.” Here the author underscores the distinctiveness of John “over against the Synoptic Gospels,” and offers this advice: “The key to an adequate and intellectually or theologically responsible interpretation of John is a recognition of the interpretative character of the narration, which avoids both the Scylla of an impossible historicism bound to yield negative results and the Charybdis of an allegorical symbolic or even theological interpretation which simply excludes any consideration of history.” To illustrate his point he presents a brief exegetical study of John 16, “a section of the so-called farewell discourses of Jesus.” The final chapter concerns “Problems and Perspectives in Preaching from John and the Synoptic Gospels and John’s Gospel, the uncertainty of “the extent and nature of the relationship between them,” and the fact that all four Gospels nevertheless stand alongside one another in the New Testament. These the author regards as influencing and balancing factors for exegesis by the preacher. A very brief “Conclusion” repeats “certain essential and recurrent points...already explicitly or implicitly made “in the prededing chapters. There follow chapter “Notes,” a short “Bibliography,” a Scripture reference index, an index of “Modern Authors and Scholars” mentioned/cited in the text, and a subject index.

This is an important contribution to the growing body of literature about modern exegesis—analysis and interpretation—of Scripture specifically meant to assist the preacher. The writer’s style and his erudition combine to offer a lot of insight and help in a relatively few words. The book belongs in every preacher’s library and deserves repeated hard usage.

Dwight Moody Smith is Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Divinity School of Duke University. He is the author of the *Proclamation Commentaries* series volume on John, published in 1976; portions of that volume appear in Part Three of *Interpreting the Gospels for Preaching*.

—William E. Paul, Jr.

THE PSALMS: STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND MESSAGE

Claus Westermann

Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN; 1980

For Jew and Christian alike it would be all but impossible to overestimate the importance of the book of Psalms. These ancient pieces of religious poetry mirror their own times, but they also reflect many if not most of the significant features of human life that are universal. In these works, most of which were meant to be sung, we find religious piety and communion with God, rebellion and indifference regarding God, repentance and the search for moral uprightness, faith, humility, trust, and serenity; there is expressed here delight in worship, fellowship with believing friends, reverence for God’s law and Word. These and other themes were used by the Hebrew poets to express not only personal religious experiences but also the religion of Israel, their religious heritage.

Dr. Westermann’s compact study of this collection of prayers, poetry and hymns offers an enlightening survey to help readers understand and appreciate the Psalms and their ageless message. In a brief devotional study of Psalm 103 (passim) at the outset of his “introduction,” he concludes that its message “...should strike us more forcefully than any previous generation in view of the forces we have learned to unleash and control and the potentially rapid development of technological masters and servants, promises and threats.

The praise of the eternal God, who from dimensions far beyond us pours fatherly goodness into our limited existence, is something which corresponds to the categories in which our generation has learned to think and move. The call not to forget is what gives meaning and direction to the complicated structures of organization, achievement, and failure in which we live. Oh how much our age needs this! And how it secretly waits for it! "The balance of the "Introduction"—and of the entire book—reflects this devotional approach.

Along with this personal spiritual discernment, Westermann provides readers with a remarkable amount of technical information and diacritical elements about the Psalms within the compass of a minimum of words. The "Introduction" lays the foundation—the brief study of Psalm 103 is followed by "The significance of the Psalms in the Bible," "How the Psalms originated," the several "collections of the Psalms," and the "Types and genres of psalms." On this foundation the book builds a sturdy edifice of explication and illustration concerning the "Structure, Content and Message" of the types and genres of the psalms. In a "Conclusion....," Psalm 90 is considered, and its extreme restraint...is very far removed from the exuberant praise of God's goodness in Psalm 103; but both 'musical modes' make up the genuine totality of the Psalms...In the contrast of Psalms 103 and 90. ...what was set forth at the beginning as characteristic of the Psalms should again be clear: the polarity of God's anger and mercy." The final chapter is a mini-commentary, "The Psalms and Christ." There follow "Appendix 1: Collections of Psalms"; "Appendix 2: Main Types (*Genres*) of Psalms", "Appendix 3: Abbreviations"; and a "Select Bibliography: Works in English for Further Study."

This is a book for every chaplain's personal library and for every chapel library. Its devotional tone, erudition and lucidity make it a dependable, authoritative companion to the reading and/or study of the Psalms. The translation from the German by Ralph D. Gehrke, Professor of Old Testament at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, truly enhances the original for the English reader.

Claus Westermann is already widely known among Christian clergy as a former professor of Old Testament at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, who has written several books and numerous articles. Among his best known books in English are *Handbook to the Old Testament*, *Handbook to the New Testament*, and *The Old Testament and Jesus Christ*.

— — William E. Paul, Jr.

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